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In the breaking of the bread

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By James I. Vance, D.D.

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In the Breaking of the Bread

A Volume of Communion Addresses

By

JAMES I. VANCE, D.D., L.L. D.

Author of "The Life of Service," "The Rise of a Soul," "The Young Man Four-Square," "The Silver on the Iron Cross," "Tendency," etc.



NEW YORK

CHICAGO

TORONTO

Fleming H. Revell Company

LONDON

AND

EDINBURGH

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FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

1598

Printed in the United States of America

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 17 North Wabash Ave.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 75 Princes Street

Introductory Note

NEVER shall I forget the impression made upon me by the remark of a Scotchman about the Lord's Supper. He was the "pro" on the golf links of the Country Club. He had but recently brought his "lines" from the old country.

With an awesome look in his face, and in a tone of deepest reverence, he said: "I'm not forgetting, Dominie, that it's the sacrament next Sunday, and nothing shall keep me away."

It was not so much what he said as it was the way he said it. The traditions of a deeply religious race dissolved in the blood of many generations were speaking.

To the Scotch, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the "holy of holies" in Christian experience. Well for all of us if our reverence for that high hour were greater. Better for the Church if the holy mystery of the Presence could cast its spell on modern life until recreation as well as worship feel its hallowing touch. He has found a sanctuary in the common place whose soul is uplifted and summoned by the very thought of the sacrament, until he resolves that nothing shall be permitted to break his tryst with his Saviour.

It is with the hope that these communion addresses may help to cultivate such a mood that I am sending them out. If they shall direct meditation as the heart prepares for the solemn hour when we meet Him at the table; if they shall serve to quicken faith and kindle love; if they can somehow show His friends in any helpful way what "greater love" has done that He should be remembered, then these communion talks will serve their purpose.

The old-fashioned custom of a preparatory service preceding communion has largely fallen into disuse; and the Church has not gained by its omission. But there is a preparation which the heart can make in the solitude of self-examination, as the soul contemplates the holy mysteries shadowed forth in the sacrament.

It is my hope that this little volume may be found by some who love Him a help as they thus prepare.

J. I. V.

Nashville, Tenn.

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I

IN THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

"They told . . . how he was known of them in breaking of bread."—LUKE 24: 35.

IT was near midnight after one of the strangest days the world has ever known. Wonderful things had taken place that day, and so rapidly there was little time for reflection, and so marvellous that had there been time to reflect, reflection would only have deepened amazement.

The day was the day of the resurrection. That morning Christ had risen from the dead. The rock tomb was rent, and the dead Saviour walked forth into the world and showed Himself to Mary in the garden. Peter and John had visited the tomb, and had brought back the story of the empty sepulchre and of the angel's message. It was the night of that strange day.

The place, I think, was the upper room, the chamber in which Christ met for the last time with His friends. There was no place on earth more sacred. It seems to have been the only home the disciples had. There Jesus washed His disciples' feet. There the Holy Supper was instituted. There the early church gathered in prayer. There

Pentecost came to pass. And there Jesus appeared again and again to His own. Never was there a place more consecrated. No cathedral was ever fuller of a Divine Presence. And yet it was just the upper room. But if ever there was a sanctuary, it was there. Nine men wait in the upper room. There is wonder in their faces. They are talking over the strange events of the day, of Mary's message. Perhaps they recall the last night He was with them, of where He sat, of how He looked, of the tones of His voice as He spoke to them, and then of how He broke the bread and passed the cup. Thus the night wore on.

Suddenly the door opened. The two missing disciples hurriedly enter. They were not expected so soon. They had gone to Emmaus that day to spend the night, and here they are back at midnight. Something has happened. What can it be? Is there some new peril? Does some fresh danger impend? There is an air of suppressed excitement about these two men as they enter the upper room. Instantly every man is on his feet. Directly they are listening with their souls in their faces. Their hearts beat faster as they listen. They catch their breath. It is all so strange and wonderful and heavenly.

The men tell of the journey to Emmaus, of how as they went, one joined them. He inspired them with confidence, and they opened their hearts and told him all. They told him of their loss, and of

their Master's crucifixion. Then he expounded to them the Scriptures, until their hearts burned with eager hope. When they reached their destination he made as if he would go on, but they constrained him to stop and sup with them. Now they are describing the evening meal. With difficulty they control themselves as they speak of it. "He sat down with us, and taking bread in His hands, He blessed it, and broke it, and as He did so we saw Him. Our eyes were opened. It was the Master! We saw Him for one glorious, radiant instant, and then He vanished. But it was long enough for us to make sure. It was Jesus. It was He Who was nailed to the tree, Whom we laid in the tomb. He is not dead. He is alive. We have walked and talked with Him, and He was known to us in the breaking of the bread!"

Such was the story the two men told at the midnight hour in the upper room. How it must have thrilled that little company, and filled the disciples with ecstasy as they told how He was known of them in breaking of bread! Perhaps the story does not thrill us as it thrilled them. We have grown used to it. The glamour is gone. Our hearts do not burn so easily. But the message is ours; the fact that the glory of the presence of the risen Christ broke through the barriers which divide two worlds, and flashed out in conscious recognition on the faith of His disciples in the breaking of the bread is for us and for all who love Him.

THE REVEALING CHRIST

Jesus reveals Himself in the breaking of the bread. That was the message. Think of what it must have meant to those men in the upper room! It should not mean less to His disciples to-day as they gather in hallowed remembrance to partake of the symbols of His passion.

As they listened, the disciples said: "The Master is not trying to hide from us. He would not conceal Himself. He is seeking to show His face, and to meet us. The mystery of His presence is not a rare experience for the privileged few in some exceptional and exalted moment, but it is for all, and it is to be had in the homely hours of common toil, for He shows Himself in the breaking of the bread."

It was just a loaf of common bread. Christ took the poor man's fare and made it the symbol and medium of blessing. He joined the highest and rarest of spiritual privileges to the daily portion of the poor, just as though He would say: "My best is for all. If one has no more than a loaf of bread, he may still have divinity for a guest."

Is it not something to believe in a Saviour Who reveals Himself through bread, through the homely fare of the common life? Jesus is not an aristocrat. He belongs to the needy world, and associates in holy hours of fellowship through the hum-

ble and lowly things of life. Such a Presence transforms all, and makes even want itself a sacrament.

As they heard how He was known in the breaking of the bread, the disciples think of that last night when He took bread and blessed it, and said: "This is my body which is for you." They begin to see what the Saviour meant, that it was not a common meal but a sacrament, and that He was to show Himself to them down the years in the breaking of bread. Thus in a hallowed memorial they were to communicate with Him. The bread was the sacramental symbol of His presence. So with awesome reverence in their little meetings they began to observe the supper as an act of faith. The mystic Presence of the table at Emmaus was given to them also, until down the years Jesus has been making Himself known to His disciples in the breaking of the bread.

Christ reveals Himself to His friends when we think of Him and talk about Him and try to serve Him, when in some act of charity or kindness we minister to others in His name. But Jesus shows Himself to us in the breaking of the bread. He said: "This do in remembrance of me." To the devout soul who reverently partakes of the symbol of mystic fellowship at the holy table there is granted a glimpse into the glory. As at Emmaus, so always. Christ is near, until you can look across the table and see Him.

“ Speak to Him now, for He hears thee,
 And spirit with spirit doth meet,
 He is closer to thee than breathing,
 Nearer than hands and feet.”

This is the doctrine of a real Presence which every Christian may cherish, not the crude tenet that wine is changed to blood and bread to flesh at the say-so of a priest, but that the Saviour associates Himself with the divinely appointed symbols of His passion, and through these symbols which tell the story of His love, and to those who partake in faith, He makes Himself known.

If so, can I afford to neglect the holy table? Can I despise the communion season, and approach it with low and common thoughts, or with selfish and carnal views? Those two disciples nearly missed the blessing. Let us beware lest, Christ walking and talking with us, we should miss seeing Him because we do not sit with Him at the table and have Him break to us the bread of life.

THE CHRIST WHO MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN

It is the crucified Christ Who is known in the breaking of the bread. This is the message of the sacrament. It tells us that Jesus died. Those men saw this at Emmaus. There was the print of the nails and of the thorns. Christ is careful to tell us this. As often as we eat the bread and drink the cup, we do show forth His death till He come.

But it was also the risen Christ. That was the thrilling news the two men brought their comrades. It was what made them retrace the weary miles that fateful night. They returned to Jerusalem not to say: "Jesus is dead!" but to declare: "He lives!" Some seem to think it makes little difference whether one believes in the resurrection or not. Such people have never had a real sacrament. "Now is Christ risen from the dead." No dead Christ could stir the world as Christ is stirring it. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!" A dead Christ could not fulfill that promise. "Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us," and His prayers are not dead prayers. He has promised to come again. He is in His people, in the world. He is inescapable, unavoidable. Christ lives!

It is also the present Christ Who is known in the breaking of the bread. Jesus is not far away. He is with us. The Holy Supper is the sacrament of the eternal Presence. Jesus is not in the tomb, nor in the distant heaven with some great gulf of darkness between Him and His own. He is here. We may not always realize His presence. We may not see Him. But it is not because He Himself is unreal and His presence fictitious, but rather because, like Mary, our eyes are poor, rather because we, too, are slow to believe.

Christ is with us. [Heaven is at our doorstep. Jesus is at the table. It is always so. The stran-

gest thing that awesome night took place as the two men were telling their story. Suddenly they became conscious of another presence in the room. No door had opened, but Jesus was there. They thought they had left Him behind at Emmaus, but He is with them, among them. He is showing the print of the nails. He is saying: "Peace be unto you!" He is talking with His friends as He did in the old days. So it is always, in shadowy, spiritual outline, but in real protecting presence, Jesus is with us. The Christ Who hung on the cross is at our table. Just across, we can hear the beating of His heart. His hands are reaching out toward us. We hear His voice. We see His face. He is not distant. He is here. This is the message of the sacrament. In times of temptation, in hours of loneliness, in sorrow and need, Jesus is with us to sustain and comfort, to preserve us unto the end, until, having finished, we shall see Him face to face, and know as we are known.

Oh, for mysticism enough to break away from the bondage of sense and feel the spell of an unseen Presence, and catch a glimpse of the face Whose smile is heaven! We would see Jesus. May He show Himself to His friends as they gather around His table! May He speak until the heart burns! May He sit at the table and Himself bless the symbols of hallowed remembrance, until faith conquers the barriers which divide two worlds!

II

THE HOLY SUPPER

"As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."—I CORINTHIANS II: 26.

THE Holy Supper tells the story of Christianity in the days of the apostles, and in all days since the apostles, in Christian lands and in all lands, in its apparent defeats and in its unquestioned triumphs, whether regarded as a doctrinal system or a ritual of worship or an ethical revolution or a passion for a person or an enthusiasm for a kingdom. However Christianity may be regarded or estimated or interpreted, its entire story is packed into and inseparably bound up with the simple memorial observance of the Holy Supper.

There can be no doubt but Christ meant the Holy Supper to tell the story, so that if a day should come when His followers had no one to teach them, the sacrament of the Holy Supper might teach them; so that if a time should come when the Church had no hymns, no preachers, and no formal worship, its people might still meet and break bread and remember Him; so that if there should come a time when the Bible itself was taken

from them, they might have in this simple memorial of His dying love a revelation and a proclamation of the truth that saves the world.

A PERPETUAL SACRAMENT

The Holy Supper was to be perpetual.—“As often as ye eat”—was the Saviour’s word. Its observance was to be frequent. The practice of the early disciples seems to have been to break bread whenever they came together. Familiarity, however, breeds contempt, and soon reverence was dulled. The Holy Supper came to be treated as a common meal, and there came about a shameful condition of things which Paul rebukes in this chapter. In eating, some were hungry, and some drunken. Thus by experience was established the wisdom of definite communion seasons in the Church.

The frequency with which the Holy Supper is to be observed is not to be settled by any hard and fast rule. Some churches observe it every Lord’s Day, others at intervals of from two to three months. It is certainly an advantage in the way of intensified devotion and deepened reverence when the table is not approached too often. One who looks occasionally at a great mountain uplift, or gazes across a vast expanse of open sea, has his soul stirred; but those who see it all the time soon cease to see it. The Mount of Transfiguration was a great place for a spiritual rapture, but it was a

poor location for a permanent residence. The Holy Supper is not to be observed so often that we shall lose our awesome reverence and cease to regard it as holy ground. Nevertheless, we are not to forget that if it is to bless us, it must be kept again and again, for this was the Saviour's command. We are to keep it often because our souls need the help that comes in this way, and because the truths the Holy Supper proclaims are truths we cannot ponder too much nor learn too well.

Such has been the history of the Holy Supper as the centuries have come and gone. It has been a symbol along which faith has passed from generation to generation. It has been a bond of union between the saints in all ages of the Christian Church. It has kept alive the holy flames on the altar of the heart's devotion. Kingdoms have come and gone. Great churches have been erected and have fallen into decay. Sects have risen, flourished, and had their day. Continents have been discovered. Men's ideas about the universe have undergone a radical change. The very civilization of the race has altered. But through it all the noblest, knightliest, gentlest spirits have kept this simple feast.

Under what widely differing circumstances they have kept it! Sometimes in the sunlit open, sometimes hunted like wild beasts, they have fled for cover to caves and tombs to eat the bread and drink the sacramental cup. Sometimes in some gorgeous

ceremonial of Church or State, when a pontiff was consecrated, or a monarch was crowned, and some august dynasty had its day of days, and sometimes when the red wine of the cup was atoned for with the life blood of the celebrant,—still through all the years the feast has been kept by all classes and kindreds and nations and tongues, for its speech of hallowed symbolism is a language all can understand. As they have gathered high and low, king and peasant, soldier and monk, earthly distinctions have disappeared, for all have felt the spell of that Presence which makes us one.

As we come to the communion table, we push our way into this goodly company whose presence overflows all the tides of time, and the song of whose devotion must not be out of harmony with that which fills the arches of heaven itself. As we partake of the sacramental emblems, we enter into the fellowship of all those who in all the earth keep the feast,—of our brothers and sisters in other churches! How small our differences when we sit at the same table! We have fellowship with those in other lands, also, who have been gathered out of the non-Christian nations, with missionaries on the frontier, and also with that innumerable company who have crossed the flood and who have passed from the Church militant to the Church triumphant. We are not divided.

But this is not the only message the Holy Supper utters. It speaks not simply of those who keep

the feast, but chiefly of Him in Whose sweet memory the feast is kept.

THE SACRAMENT OF HIS DEATH

The Holy Supper proclaims the Saviour's death. As we take the bread, it speaks of His body wounded and bruised, of the nails driven through His hands and feet, of the thorns which pierced His brow, of the spear that was thrust into His blessed side, of His great weariness, and of the body taken from the cross and lovingly laid in Joseph's tomb. As we touch the chalice of wine to our lips, it speaks to us of the blood of Jesus, of the blood-drops in the garden, of the blood shed on the cross, of that crimson tide which cleanses the guilty soul and makes us white as snow.

The Holy Supper shows the death of Christ. Jesus would keep forever fresh in the hearts of His people the remembrance of His death. He would not have them lose or forget the least detail or the slightest incident connected with it. Whenever the Supper is kept, it is as though the sacramental emblems would say: "Come, look into the face of the dead Christ, and worship the wounds of the Redeemer!"

It is His death that saves us. The thought that He loved us enough to die for us makes us better. The contemplation of a love so steadfast and divine that it did not draw back at the cross gives us hope. The penalty He paid there on the accursed

tree forever emancipates us from condemnation. What an atonement is the death of Christ!

And so we eat the bread and drink the cup, and proclaim that Christ died. This is what Christ's followers have been doing for two thousand years. They have not been trying to hide their Leader's death, or to conceal a fact which to the world would seem a certain sign of defeat. They have been boasting of it. As believers have gathered through the passing years, they have been saying to each other and to the world: "He died. Our God died." He is the only God in the annals of worship Who is not afraid to have His followers say it of Him, and the reason He is not afraid is that His death is His people's deathless hope.

THE SACRAMENT OF HIS RETURN

The Holy Supper predicts that Christ will come again. It shows His death till He comes. He died, but He is not dead. He is coming. Death did not even stop Him. The cross was merely a station on the road Christ travelled. Therefore, so far from being a defeat, it was a glorious victory.

What are we to understand by Christ's return? The Church has been perplexed to know. The early disciples looked for a speedy return, but the centuries have come and gone, and still the Church kneels with its face toward the coming Christ and prays: "Oh, Lord, tarry not, but come!" It cannot refer to His resurrection, for it was His ascen-

sion promise. It must mean more than His coming at death when the shadow door opens and we see Him face to face. He is coming in the life of the world, in its laws and institutions, in its charities and philanthropies, in the very character of its civilization, in the kingdom that is coming. Must it not, however, mean more than this? For the promise is not till we go to Him, till we are like Him, till His kingdom come, but till He come. It is a prophecy of the personal return of Jesus.

Christ is coming. This is the hope which sustained the early Christians, and made them invincible. Christ was not going from them, but coming toward them. His face was turned toward them. They were afraid of nothing. Sacrifice was easy. Persecution was privilege. Martyrdom was ecstasy. They stood it all, and died without sob or tear or regret, with a song which ceased not until their pallid lips lost the power of speech.

The Holy Spirit speaks to us of this sublime hope. It proclaims that Christ died, and predicts that He is coming. He is on His way. He is more in the world than ever. He is Christ with a future. He is not merely a dead Christ with a withered wreath on the closed door of a stone tomb, but He is a living, rejoicing, conquering, coming Christ, with a crown and a kingdom.

Let us rejoice and be confident, as we eat the bread and drink the cup; for every time we keep the

Holy Supper, faith is strengthened and courage increased. All the sublime values of the Gospel are certified to us as personal and present assets. The past is holy and the future secure. We rise with the morning light in our faces, and the coronation hymn on our lips. Christ is coming. Hallelujah!

III

THE MYSTICAL FRIENDSHIP

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."—JOHN 15: 14.

JESUS speaks of the mystical friendship. He does not mean that His friendship is a myth, for no friendship is less mythical, more real, more substantial. He means that His friendship is a mystery, and a mystery not in the sense that it is mysterious, obscure, incomprehensible, but in the sense that it is revealed. It is a thing we would never have known unless God had told us about it. It is a mystery in the sense Paul meant when, speaking of the Christian's immortality, he said: "Behold, I shew you a mystery, a holy secret, a divine and eternal reality. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." In this sense, Jesus' friendship is a mystery, a holy secret, a divine and eternal reality God has revealed.

It is a sacramental friendship, for it is a friendship commemorated each time faith partakes of the sacred emblems of the Saviour's passion. Its love glows in the mystic, hallowed light of the Eucharist, and flames in lambent devotion around the communion table, until that humble altar becomes more glorious than a sapphire throne, and

its sweet content fills the heart with a deep and eternal peace.

For this mystical friendship is none other than the friendship between the divine and the human, between God and man, between the Saviour of the world and sinners forgiven. Can it be that such a friendship exists? Christ declares that it does. Revelation lifts the veil, and says: "Behold, I shew you a mystery. Ye are my friends." It is a wonderful friendship.

CHRIST FOR A FRIEND

It is a blessed thing for us to have Christ for a friend,—not a judge, not a far-off personality veiled in awesome authority, not merely a guide or a teacher, not only a Redeemer, but a friend. One good friend saves the day. He changes the world, and makes life endurable. I recall a visit a homesick Dane once made me. He had a close friend. They had become estranged. His heart was broken. His life was plunged in gloom. He was going back to Denmark, not because he had lost his work or his health, but because he had lost his friend. What a privilege to have for your friend the Son of God, the supreme Ruler of the world!

We have such a friend. We may not have many other friends. We may have few worldly friends, but none so poor and humble and unattractive as to be without one friend, and that One the best.

The proof of Christ's friendship is as strong as it can be made. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Christ seems to say: "I will prove to you that I am your friend. I will die for you, dear soul." And He did. He laid down His life for us. Can we doubt Him after this? It is easier to doubt the character of God than the friendship of Jesus.

This is the message of the sacrament. It speaks to us of the mystical friendship. It declares that Jesus is our friend. Do you need a friend? There is Jesus. Do you need someone to understand and comfort you? There is Jesus. Let Him be your friend, your closest, dearest friend. Tell all to Him. Live your life in the courage of this faith, with your daily experience sweetened and sanctified by the mystical friendship.

"What a friend we have in Jesus!"

CHRIST'S FRIENDS

It is a holy thing for Christ to have us for His friends. He claims us. He says: "Ye are my friends." He says: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "Therefore I am your friend." But this is not all. "Therefore ye are my friends,—not my servants, my subjects, not merely my apostles, my disciples and ambassadors, but something better,—my friends."

Have I ever thought of myself as a friend of Christ? He is mine, but am I His? Have others ever thought of me as Christ's friend? As they have looked at me, have they said: "There goes a friend of Jesus Christ"? Could anything finer ever be said of me? Am I as true to Him as He is to me? Am I as ready to confess His cause as He is to champion mine? Am I as willing to lay down my life for Him as He was ready to lay down His life for me?

He has told us the proof of His friendship for us. It was His death. He has also told us the proof of our friendship for Him. We are to do His commandments. Could anything be simpler? We are just to do His will, to do the things He told us, to practise His teachings, to follow in His footsteps. In this way do we show that we are His friends. Let me do my duty as it comes to me day by day, with faith in Him, and I am His friend. It may be something that never wins a cheer from the people about me, but if it pleases Him, if it makes Christ happy, my reward is complete.

The sacrament is saying this also. "Ye are Christ's friends if ye do whatsoever He commands you." Let us make life sacramental with this resolve. It is not enough to offer worship. We must also do His will. As we do, the little deeds of life, like the bramble on Sinai, become flaming shekinahs out of which God speaks.

THE TREASURES OF THE MYSTICAL FRIENDSHIP

Because we are friends, Christ takes us into His confidence. He says: "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." He shares the great secrets of the universe with His friends. This is one of the tests of friendship. There must be absolute confidence. Christ gives us His. Shall I decline to give Him mine?

Because we are His friends, He enriches our lives, and makes us fruitful. He says: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." As we do His will, life is saved from barrenness. It is not difficult to be useful. It is necessary only to do the Saviour's will. Then we are useful. Then do we bring forth fruit, and our fruit abides forever. The fruits of the mystical friendship never wither. Anything done for Christ is immortal.

Because we are His friends, Christ invests us with influence, so that whatsoever we ask in His name is given us. Christ clothes His friends with august and imperial power. "Whatsoever" is a big word before the throne of the Almighty. No ambassador was ever given such credentials. No representative of royalty ever possessed such

boundless influence. Christ's friends need only to go to God and ask what they will, and it is done.

These are the promises of which the sacrament is the seal. If the sacred symbols of the Saviour's passion had a tongue, this is what they would say. This is what Christ does for His friends. He takes us into His confidence. Shall we decline to let Him? He makes us fruitful. Shall we hinder His gracious desires? He invests us with influence. Shall we limit His power?

The mystical friendship is a seraphic friendship. Its light shines around the communion table. Its song is musical in the heart that yields its adoration at the altar of remembrance. Christ meets us in the mystery of communion, and says: "I am your friend. Ye are my friends. If you would make me happy, do the things I command you. Doing them, you shall know all that God has told me. You shall bring forth fruit that shall abide, and you shall have power to sway the will of God, so that whatsoever you ask of Him shall be done."

Oh, to be a friend of Christ, just a friend of Jesus Christ, a good, true, faithful, loyal, constant friend of Him Who loved me and gave Himself for me!

IV

CHRIST LIVETH IN ME

"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."—GALATIANS 2:20.

ON July 1st, 1555, John Bradford was burned to death. He was chaplain to King Edward Sixth of England, and was one of the most popular preachers of his day. But he was a martyr to his faith. As he was being driven out to Newgate to be burned, permission was given him to speak, and from the wagon in which he rode to his death the entire way out from West London to Newgate he shouted: "Christ, Christ, none but Christ!" John Bradford was feeling very much as Paul must have felt when he wrote this sublime line which will be our communion meditation. Only with Paul, it was not the outburst of a spasmodic elation, but the expression of a life habit. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Here are five startling statements, in each of

which a man reaches out into the infinite and lays hold of the eternal.

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

"I am crucified with Christ." What a daring thing for a man to say! Christ had been crucified. He had climbed the lonely thorn-path to that hill-top crowned with a cross. He had hung in sacrificial agony on the accursed tree. The nails had been driven through His hands and feet. The thorns had pierced His brow, and the spear-head had torn open His side. In the midnight of His passion for men, His anguished soul had cried: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

And now Paul is saying: "I was there on the cross with Christ. I am crucified with Him. Every throb of agony He felt I have suffered. The nails have been driven into my hands and feet. The thorns have pierced my brow. Into my side, too, the spear has entered, and I have had moments when I could understand that lonely cry of the forsaken Christ. It is my cross as well as His. Look, I bear about in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

It was a devoted soul struggling to say how he loved his Master, declaring that he was so utterly identified with Christ as to be a partaker of His passion, as to be branded with the marks and wounds of Calvary. "I am crucified with Christ." Can we say it? Has there ever been a single mo-

ment when we were so lost in the Saviour as to be able to say: "Christ, Christ, none but Christ!"

"NEVERTHELESS I LIVE"

But the cross did not kill Christ. It immortalized Him. His enemies thought they were putting an end to His influence. They were only clearing the way for Christ to take the throne. But for His crucifixion, He would soon have ceased to live. In a little while He would have been forgotten.

Paul is saying: "I thought I was dying when they crucified me with Christ, but I find that what I took to be the door of death was the gate of life. I have never been so much alive. I have become deathless. My foes are powerless to hurt me. Death itself is disarmed. I walk through the valley of death, nevertheless I live."

The cross cannot kill Christ's friends. It is not the symbol of death, but of life. It is the badge of immortality. Those who die for a great cause do not die. They are alive forevermore. Death has not defeated them. It has only cleared the way to the throne.

"CHRIST LIVETH IN ME"

"Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Paul seems to say: "I am the same man that I was before I was crucified with Christ, yet I am very different. I am a new man. I live because I am

the incarnation of Him Who is the source of life. I can never die, because Christ liveth in me."

Think of the life one should live who has come down from the cross to this sublime experience, who has made the marvellous discovery that Christ lives in him, who has in his own life experience the irrefutable proof that Christ is risen! Such an one must live as Christ lived. If Christ lives in him, he must think as Christ would think, and suffer as Christ would suffer, and serve as Christ would serve. His sole concern must be: "What would Christ have me do?"

Would you like to be able to say: "Christ liveth in me"? You can never say it until you have been to Calvary, until you have been crucified with Christ. Nor can you ever say it unless you are willing to live His life and think His thoughts and share His suffering, unless you are willing to take up your cross and follow Him. "Christ liveth in me." My, how Paul is climbing! His hands are on the throne itself. It is so with all within whom Christ lives.

"I LIVE BY FAITH"

"And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." This is his explanation of his sublime experience. He seems to say: "You are asking how Christ lives in me. It is simple. It is the result of faith. I am still living an earthly life. I am human. I am no an-

gel. I am far from being a saint. I am in the flesh. I am subject to law, and beset by temptations, and hedged about by limitations, and forever struggling against the foes of my spirit. I am no wraith, but a man with all the frailties and faults of an ordinary mortal. But this flesh life that I live, I live by faith in the Son of God, and because I have faith in Him, He lives in me."

Faith is the way we enter into the life of God. Faith is the secret of everything that is great. It reaches out into the infinite. It touches omnipotence and omniscience and omnipresence. It has contact with the eternal. We are still in the flesh. The voices of the flesh are crying in our blood. But we do not believe in the flesh. We believe in the Son of God. That is creed enough, just to believe in Him enough to be willing to share His cross with Him. That is theology enough. With such a faith as this, the commonplace becomes the vestibule of divinity.

"By faith I am crucified with Christ. By faith death is vanquished. By faith Christ liveth in me. For the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in Him. As I go about my daily work, as I walk the streets and meet my fellows, as I live this flesh life, I live not as an angel, for I am far from being sanctified, but I do live by faith. I so utterly believe in the Son of God that He has become a part of me, that He has become my life, until His very wounds are mine."

“WHO LOVED ME AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME”

The secret is out. It is love. That is what is back of faith. As Paul closes the sentence, he gives the secret away. There is a man hanging on a cross, but behind the cross is a man death cannot kill, and behind the man death cannot kill is Christ, and behind Christ is faith, and behind faith is love. Because there is love, it is easy to have faith, and because there is faith, it is easy to have Christ, and because there is Christ, it is easy to have life, and because there is life, the cross is not defeat, but victory. “Who loved me and gave himself for me.”

It is not hard to believe in one who does that for you. It is easy to trust someone who thinks more of you than of his own life. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Paul is saying that as he saw Christ hanging on the tree, he discovered that He was dying for him. Then he said to himself: “I must hang beside Him.” And so he took his place beside Christ on the cross, and as he did that, he found that Christ was not only dying for him, but living in him.

Christ is the secret. Thinking about Him, dwelling with Him, following Him, preaching Him, loving Him, until you are like Him,—this is the purpose of communion. The sacramental symbols are saying: “He loved me and gave himself for me.” They disclose the eternal secret.

Has that secret found expression in my experience? Does Christ live in me? As I drive down the street to-morrow, is it with me: "Christ, Christ, none but Christ!" As I go about my work does Christ live in me? Do men meet Christ when they meet me? This is where God expects the world to find Christ to-day—in the lives of His followers. When Michael Angelo painted his great pictures in the Sistine Chapel at Rome, instead of painting them on the walls of the chapel he frescoed the ceiling with these marvellous creations of his art. And yet when the people go there to gaze at the pictures, they do not look up, but down. At the door each one, as he enters, is given a small mirror, and as he walks about he studies the wonderful pictures in the dome as they are reflected in the little mirror which he holds in his hand. Christ has gone up into the heavens, but the mirror is on earth. "Ye are my witnesses." Oh, that they may see Him in my life! If so, I must share Calvary with Him. I, too, must be able to say: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

V

THE GLORY OF THE CROSS

"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."—GALATIANS 6: 14.

AFTER much discussion and prolonged argument about things not easy to understand, this is the conclusion Paul reaches. Is it a sane conclusion?

Is the apostle level-headed or flighty in his determination to glory in the cross? Is his statement sound sense or a spasm of hysterics? No doubt the great majority of the people of his day thought Paul beside himself. In deference to public opinion, he himself seems to admit it, when he declares: "I have become a fool in glorying."

Then the cross was a badge of shame. It was a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. The world regarded it very much as we now regard the gallows. It was a mark of infamy, a symbol of the penalty for the worst of crimes. It was the fate society visited on those who were too dangerous to be kept in prison, and too bad to be allowed to live. There is no glory in this sort of thing. We would call the man crazy who would boast of the gallows, who would take pride in suffering the severest penalty the law inflicts on red-handed

transgression. If this is what Paul means, he has worse than hysterics. It is not what he means.

He had seen the cross in the light of Calvary, haloed with the love which redeems the world, consecrated by the sufferings not of a criminal, but of a Saviour, Who makes bad people good, rights wrong, comforts sorrow, and banishes evil from the world. He saw the cross as the symbol of the sufferings of God for His wayward and wandering children. He heard there the call of the Father for His own. He beheld the cross, not as the symbol of the penalty society inflicts on the worst, but as a token of the sufferings of the holiest and best to save the worst. He saw it as Christ had transformed it, into a sign of heroic self-sacrifice, and he said: "I glory in that!"

Is this the boast of a crazy man? Is it wild and fanatical? Is it flighty and hysterical? Is it the mood of a man whose emotions have swept him from the moorings of sound judgment and ordinary sanity?

HERO WORSHIP

What is more glorious than true heroism and real sacrifice? The world worships heroism. The religion of the people is still hero worship, and it is not a bad religion. It would be a tame, stale world were heroism and sacrifice to go out of fashion, were deeds that are daring and dangerous and difficult no longer to be applauded.

It is simply the glory of heroism, of dangerous and daring adventure, that the world worships to-day,—now of a man who flies in an airship, now of a crew who cross the ocean in a submarine, again of an explorer who three centuries ago pushed out into the wide, wild, trackless sea in a frail boat, and again of those who fight their way through fields of arctic ice and across perilous leads to the top of the world. The story of Henry Hudson is not the story of a man discovering a river. Anybody might do that. The discovery of the North River was a mere incident of Hudson's career. The real story is that of a bold explorer who adventured an unknown world ocean on a tiny craft, and who died at last on the frozen sea in quest of a northwest passage.

The glory of the bold explorers who ever and again hold the centre of the stage as the world listens to their story of hardship and heroism in quest of the earth's poles is not that they have added anything to the world's wealth or happiness. They have opened no new continent whither the down-trodden and oppressed of earth may flee for refuge. They have made no valuable contribution to the solution of the great problems of government and trade and social life. The world admires them because they have done or seem to have done a hard thing. They have been daring enough to jeopardize life in a difficult enterprise.

This on a divine scale is the fascination of the

cross of Christ. The cross is the world's finest symbol of heroism. It is the highest expression of the life laid down. It is the loftiest standard of unselfish service and sacrifice.

The cross is more than this. It does not stand for mere spectacular sacrifice, for ordinary newspaper heroism, for a barren exploit ending in fireworks and a dinner party. Calvary is not stagy. Its publicity is not intentional but incidental. Jesus did not die just to be dying. He died to bless people, to make the bad good, to heal the open sore of the world and banish evil from mankind. There is no such heroism as that of the Man of Galilee, and the thought of it down the ages has been stirring the sluggish pulses of a dying world, and lifting men to high ideals and noble deeds. Little wonder that one of the greatest and best of men should say: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

What Christianity needs to-day is a fresh infusion of the heroic. It has grown soft and flabby with success. A cheap religion will never save the world. Ease and self-indulgence cannot speak to men in the tones of Calvary. The religion of the future, like the religion of the past, will be hero worship.

The cross stands for the heroism of God, Who did not spare Himself in the hardest thing ever attempted by God or man. Paul was not glorying in his own cross. He was not proud of crosses,

of petty trials, of daily vexations. It was the cross of Christ that held him. It was that cross on the lonely hilltop where hung One Who being God became man, Who though rich became poor, Who took the great world up into His heart, Who having lived the sweetest, fairest life, died the saddest and most shameful death just to help people, to comfort them and save them from despair.

Paul says: "This is the thing in which I glory, and God forbid that I should glory in anything else!" I think he had his wits about him. We can afford to be enthusiastic over the cross. If there is anything glorious, it is the cross. If there is anything worth living for and giving to and dying for, it is the cross. If there is aught to which we may proclaim allegiance without a blush, and to which we may anchor our eternal hopes without a fear, it is the cross. Glorious cross! "All the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime!"

APPLAUSE OF THE CROSS

The holy communion is the Church's solemn applause of the cross. In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper we commend the sacrificial heroism of the world's Redeemer. If we are sincere as we take the bread and wine, it is just a way we have of saying: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!" Save in the heroism and sacrifice of Him Who died to find

me, Who gave His life to discover my lost soul amid the barren wilds! Have we made the vow? Are we praying, not for ease or success, but for a soul great enough to appreciate Calvary? The communion is a call to get away from the shop and mart and desk and tools and little time plans, and survey the wondrous cross on which the Saviour gave His life. As that cross casts its spell over us, "our richest gains we count but loss, and pour contempt on all our pride."

Let us understand that glorying, to be genuine, must be more than a phrase. For one to say, "I glory," means far more than for him to say, "I approve; I am pleased; I am proud; I boast." It is comparatively easy to do that with Calvary. It is not hard to stand off and gaze at it and say fine things about it, and say it is wonderful, it is great and glorious. But that is not what Paul meant. He meant, "I am ready to be offered; I yearn to experience the cross." Glory is a word for character. When a man says: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross," he is praying that the cross may become a personal experience.

We are beginning now to see what he meant. He was dead in earnest. He was making a great vow that he could pay only with his life. Am I ready to make it, and in the same great way? God forbid that I should seek a life of ease, of selfishness, of vain pleasures, of worldly fame and gaudy show! God forbid that I should draw back at

hardship, or protest at self-denial! There stands the cross. Let me experience it. Let me taste its passions. Let me be swayed by its power. Let me live it and prove its reality.

It is not easy. It is easy to sing: "In the cross of Christ I glory," but to live that song is not easy. May God grant grace to live it! In the hallowed hush of a mystic communion with Him Who has made the hated cross the radiant symbol of the world's sublimest heroism and holiest sacrifice, may my halting lips try to make the prayer of the cross! "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

VI

THE POWER OF THE CROSS

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."—JOHN 12: 32, 33.

ONE of the loveliest girls of the city died in the morning of life. She had all the world could give to make life happy, and she had what the world could not give nor take away. The most precious thing she left, though, was a little note-book in which from time to time she had written down the things which had made the strongest appeal to her deepest nature. In conducting the funeral, I read some quotations from this little book. They revealed the girl's inner life. They lifted the veil from her soul. They proclaimed her ideals. The very last line she had written was this: "The power of the cross is the greatest power on earth." There is no profounder truth.

This was Christ's own estimate of the cross. Jesus did not shun the cross. He sought it. He felt that He could never succeed without it. He might teach and preach and heal, but if He was to save, He must reach the cross. This is what He meant by being lifted up from the earth. He is

speaking of His crucifixion. He is saying: "My goal is Calvary. My crown is a chaplet of thorns. My throne is a cross."

He felt the same way about His disciples. He saw no future for them apart from the cross. If they were to save the world, they must travel to Calvary and wear the thorns, too. If they were to overcome the world, they must manage somehow to get themselves crucified. And so He said to them: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."

The world is coming to see it as Christ saw it. Three hundred years had not gone by before the Roman Emperor saw it, and tearing down the eagle, he let fly the cross, declaring: "In this sign we conquer!" To-day the symbolism of the cross is written over all the struggles men are making for a better world. It is our emblem of hope. It is our badge of immortality. It is our decoration of honour. It marks the road to glory and to God. Yes, the power of the cross is the greatest power on earth. Those who ignore the cross miss the best. Those who deny it are doomed to defeat. Those who despise it are lost already.

What is the power of the cross?

SURRENDER

It is the power of surrender. Follow Christ into the garden on the night of the betrayal.

Watch Him as He wins His great victory. The conflict is sore. The sweat is, as it were, great drops of blood pouring to the ground. But as He says: "Not my will, but thine, be done," the triumph is complete and the adversary is vanquished.

There is power in surrender, in what you give up, in being big enough to determine not to have your own way. There is power not in resistance, but in dependence; not in striking back, but in yielding; not in crushing, but in clinging. This was the discovery Jacob made as he wrestled that fateful night with the angel at the brook. The power of victory came to him when ceasing to contend, he began to cling.

SUFFERING

It is the power of suffering. Calvary is a story of suffering. Christ's sufferings were real. He was not an actor. His agonies were more than physical. Calvary was the agony of a great soul making propitiation. Its loneliness was the solitude of a mighty spirit breaking away out of the night's darkness for others. It was the loneliness of the great-hearted Christ, crying: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

There is power in what you suffer. We think of suffering as a sign of weakness. Christ thought of it as an evidence of power. It is the price that must be paid for life. Every mother pays this

price for the baby that cries in her arms. Christ, Who took the world on His heart as He hung on the cross, was paying this price, for it says: "He shall see of the travail of his soul." The power of the cross is the power of suffering, of those who have gone up through great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. It is only the souls that travail that possess the power which is to bring in the new day.

SACRIFICE

It is the power of sacrifice. Christ put Himself aside. He possessed all the powers of Godhood, and used them for others, but never for Himself. He could make bread with words, but He never turned a stone to bread to satisfy His own hunger. He could raise the dead. But He never lifted a finger to staunch His own wounds. One of the sublimest things ever written of Him is this: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath also highly exalted him."

There is power in sacrifice, in what you give up rather than what you claim, in what you lose rather

than in what you gain, in doing your duty rather than in claiming your rights, in stepping down rather than in pushing up. So the marching order for the kingdom takes us to the cross. If you want power, you must let go.

SERVICE

It is the power of service. Christ did not suffer just to be suffering. His agony was not spectacular. Calvary was not an exhibition. It was an experience. It was not sacrifice to achieve merit, but to provide redemption. He suffered to keep others from suffering. He sacrificed that others might not be condemned. He died that the condemned might be forgiven. The cross is the symbol not of penance, but of service. Jesus hung on the cross that one who is in a far country might find the way back to the Father's house. In the very act of expiation, Jesus, forgetting Himself, lifts nail-pierced hands to open the door for a penitent thief to pass into Paradise.

There is power in service, in what you do for others. He is greatest who is a servant. "I am among you as one that serveth." This is the way a God talks, and those who are made on such a measure are the heroes men to-day adore.

LOVE

It is the power of love. Love is the greatest

thing in the world. Love seems weakest, but is strongest. God is love. The resistless power of the cross is the matchless winsomeness of love. Christ loves us into goodness. This is the secret of becoming Godlike.

If you want power, you must love. The power of hate is the power to hurt, to destroy, to damn. Such power is doomed. The power love has is the power to help, to reclaim, to redeem. Such power is immortal. The power of hate is the power of the wind. The power of love is the power of the sun. The wind destroys and exhausts itself. The sun warms and comforts and brings life to the world.

DEATH

It is the power of dying. The power of the cross is not the power of being dead, but of dying. Christ died and is alive forevermore. There is no death to the Christian, and yet there is no escape from dying. Christ's death on the cross was not the cessation of physical functions. It was the experience of His great soul in expiation. It was something like this that Paul had in mind when he said: "I die daily."

There is power in dying daily. There is power in living the cross, in climbing on the stepping-stones of your dead self to higher things. It is on the stones of surrender and suffering and sacrifice and service and love that the soul climbs to power.

“For thus looking within and around
Do we ever renew
With that stoop of the soul
Which in bending upraises it, too,
The submission of man’s nothing perfect
To God’s all complete,
As by each new obeisance of spirit
We climb to His feet.”

These are some of the elements of power in the cross. There is no greater power on earth nor in heaven. No wonder over the graves of the soldiers love plants a cross. It is more than a symbol of death or an emblem of hope. It is a sign of power. It is a way of saying that the soldiers who fought and died that the world might be free have not suffered defeat. The long rows of white crosses make their mute appeal to mankind, and are themselves clothed with a power that is invincible. In those fields of crosses there is more power than in all palaces and arsenals. There is the hillcrest from which, like Calvary, a great sacrifice looks down with a summons that cannot be resisted. It is a kind of prophecy that the cross will yet break down the walls of hate, and draw men into the fraternity of good will. For “greater love hath no man than this.”

It is to keep all this forever in mind that the Holy Supper was instituted. It is the sacrament of the cross. It is a picture story of the greatest power on earth. As we partake of the sacred em-

blems of Christ's passion, let us salute the cross. Let us hail its mighty power. Let us surrender to its holy influence. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 'This He said signifying what death He should die."

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gains I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride."

VII

CROSS-BEARING

"They found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear his cross."—MATTHEW 27: 32.

CHRIST is on His way to Calvary. He is going out to Calvary to be crucified, to have the nails driven through His hands and feet, to have an ugly gash torn in His side by a Roman spear-head, to wear a crown of thorns, and to hang on a cruel cross until death comes to lower the curtain on His pain. He has had a hard night. He has had no sleep. He came straight from the agony in Gethsemane to His trial, which lasted through the remaining hours of that awful night, and when day came, it brought only the rough abuse of crafty foes and the jeers and insults of a heartless mob. Worn, haggard, spent, loaded down with the cross on which He is to die, Jesus staggers out toward Calvary. He stumbles and falls from sheer weakness. They drag Him to His feet, but He stumbles again, and again He falls. He cannot rise now. His strength is gone. There He lies with the curious crowd looking on. It was a sight to make the angels of heaven weep.

It all happened at the gate as they were going out. There they met a man who was coming in.

He had been out in the country, and he was coming into the city. I like to think that he had no hand in that wild night of infamy and hate, that his voice was not mingled with the cries of those who shouted: "Crucify Him!" and that his soul was not stained with innocent blood. His name was Simon. He was from Cyrene, in Northern Africa. Whether a visitor at the feast or a member of the Cyrenean colony dwelling in Jerusalem, we do not know; but he was coming in as the death guard was going out. And they lift the cross from the fallen Christ, and lay it on the strong shoulders of the man of Cyrene.

And now they are going on toward Calvary. Christ is on His feet again, and the man who carries His cross walks beside Him. There they go together, Christ and His cross-bearer, the Saviour Who directly will be nailed to His death on the cross and from Whose dying lips will sound the loneliest sob that ever broke the silence of despair, and beside Him the man whose strong shoulders have taken from His broken and spent body its weary load.

I wonder what passed between those two as they went out to Calvary. I am not curious to know what the soldiers said, nor am I interested in that shoddy rabble that dogged His steps; but I am interested in the man who carried His cross. Perhaps Jesus did not speak. He was too weak for words. But I think there must have been a

moment when their eyes met, and Jesus gave His cross-bearer a look the beauty and glory of which Simon carried with him to his dying day. And I like to think that Simon said something to Jesus as they went on together,—just a word to hearten the worn sufferer, to cheer and comfort the weary spirit of the tired Christ.

With this old story before us, I want us to make our communion meditation the subject of cross-bearing, for whoever walks with Christ must carry a cross. That is what it means to be a Christian. Some think only of escape and exemption. We would be saved not for what we can do, but for what we can get. We are thinking of the crown, of heavenly rest. But the cross comes first. Jesus made this plain when He said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." In this story of Simon we discover what is involved in cross-bearing.

HORROR

There was the horror of the cross. It is not there to-day. The cross has become a decoration to be worn by dainty women and soft men. Silver-smiths work it into wonderful designs and set it with rich jewels and make it into a god. The cross features music, and embellishes architecture, and adorns art. Its horror is gone.

It was not so in the day Simon carried Christ's cross. All the infamy of the gallows was there.

It was the last word of disgrace for the condemned. It stood for all that was loathsome and repulsive. It was the form in which the extremest penalty was meted out to criminals of the lowest and vilest kind. It was not possible for Simon to escape a feeling of horror as he found himself branded with the stigma of the cross.

In a way, this element of horror abides for us if we really understand what cross-bearing for Christ involves. His cross is not that picture in the stained glass of the church window. It is not the symbol that is placed at the top of the church spire. It is the sacrifice which cuts to the quick in the soul. Sometimes it involves the surrender of what is dearest in life. As we face our Golgotha and learn the price that must be paid, something of the horror of the cross still stages itself in our experience.

UNEXPECTEDNESS

There was the unexpectedness of the cross. Simon walked into his Calvary. There was no announcement. It took him by surprise. He was not even a member of the parade, not even a sight-seer. He was going the other way. There was every reason why he should be the last to be chosen. But all at once, he finds himself singled out and loaded down with the cross.

Usually it comes as a surprise. The bolt falls from the blue. Suffering and pain do not wait to

be announced. They enter without introduction. We never know what to-morrow holds. The cross never heralds its approach. In this, our cross differs from Christ's. His was expected. Its shadow was always on His path. He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. But God mercifully spares us this anticipation. It is enough to know that when the cross comes, strength will be given to bear the load.

COMPULSION

There was the compulsion of the cross. "Him they compelled to bear his cross." It reads as if Simon protested. What had he ever done to be thus stigmatized? He was attending to his own business. He is a peaceful, law-abiding citizen. He has had nothing to do with the trial. They have selected the wrong man; if they must have a cross-bearer, let them take one of those hoarse-throated ruffians who have hounded Him to trial and who were so keen for His conviction. But they declined to listen to protest, and Simon is compelled.

There is a compulsion in cross-bearing. You have wondered why the load should have been laid on you. What have you done to deserve it? It does not seem fair. You make your protest. But it is all a waste of words. Back of the cross is a great mystery. Christ did not deserve Calvary, but there was no way for Him to escape. Perhaps

some day the curtain will lift, and there will be an explanation, but now the cross compels. It were easier not to murmur. It were better cheerfully to take the cross and follow Him.

SEVERITY

There was the severity of the cross. Cross-bearing is not easy. It is hard. The cross is heavy. It crushed Christ. Simon was worn before he laid his burden down where Jesus was to die and where all burdens slip from tired shoulders, and the weary find rest. But there is a severity, a hardness, a sternness about crosses. Sacrifice wears a commandment face as it summons us to duty.

And yet this is the glory of the cross. This constitutes its heroism. Christianity is not a cheap religion. It challenges the best there is in the soul. It calls for hearts that are courageous. It does not offer ease and the pleasures of a soft life, but it speaks of the storm, and sternly calls to hardship and trial. But these things which I have mentioned are not all. There is another side to cross-bearing.

FELLOWSHIP

There was the fellowship of the cross. It was Simon's chance to walk with Christ. He walked out of obscurity into fame bearing the cross. But for this, we should probably never have heard of him. This was his introduction to Jesus. And what an intimate fellowship followed! The very

beam that had pressed down into Christ's flesh now presses into the flesh of Simon. A while ago the load was on Christ. It is now His cross-bearer's. What a bond! Who would shrink from such a sweet load? Welcome the burden that is a bond of fellowship with Christ!

Who knows but the fellowship of that hour made Simon a Christian? He has reached home, and is telling his wife the story. He seems to say: "Wife, I have had a wonderful time to-day. I met a man unlike any I have ever known before. They were taking Him out to crucify Him. And they made me bear His cross. But He was no criminal. He was the gentlest, purest, most heavenly Man I have ever met. He was more like God. I believe in Him." And after a while, I fancy his wife said: "I believe in Him, too." And so they took the Hero of Calvary into their hearts. They had two sons, Alexander and Rufus. The years drift by. They seem to be living in Rome now. One day they have a preacher in their home. They learn to love him, and he counts them as his dear friends. And as he closes his letter to the Romans, Paul says: "Salute Rufus, that choice Christian, and his mother, who has also been a mother to me."

Oh, the fellowship of the cross! This is the way we find Him,—in the fellowship of His sufferings; and as we share our sufferings with Him, we are not depressed. We are glorified.

MEMORY

There was the memory of the cross. Some days Simon forgot. There were weeks and months that were a blank in his life. But he never forgot the day he carried Christ's cross. It stood out, radiant among all the days of his life. It stamped itself forever on his memory. He loved to think about it, to seek a quiet spot now and then and recall that great hour when he walked with Christ and bore His cross. It is the cross that glorifies memory, and it is memory that transfigures the cross. There is pain at the time, but somehow as time goes on, the pain fades out, and only the glory remains. Thus the days we cherish are the days when we suffered with Him. The deeds we prize are the sacrifices we were permitted to make for Him. It is so here. It must be the same in heaven. Hence, one has nothing worth remembering if he has carried no cross for Christ.

TRIUMPH

There was the triumph of the cross. Three days had not gone by ere it showed itself. Christ is risen. The flame of the holy evangel begins to spread. By the thousands they are acclaiming the crucified One as Lord and King. As Simon hears of all this, he becomes increasingly proud of the day he bore Christ's cross. This is his distinction in the early church. When they introduced him

to new disciples, this was the thing they said about him: "This is the Simon who carried His cross." It was distinction enough.

The cross is increasingly triumphant. Ours is not a lost cause.

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run."

The cross is not our despair. It is our hope. It is not weight, but wings. It is not penalty, but reward. All hail the cross! "They found a man of Cyrene. Him they compelled to bear his cross." Are they laying a cross from Christ's shoulders on you? Do not shrink or turn away. Rather rejoice. For if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.

VIII

PEACE! PERFECT PEACE!

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."—JOHN 14: 27.

THIS was Christ's bequest to His disciples at the communion table. They are gathered in the upper room. Soon they will go to the garden. From the garden, Christ will go to the cross, from Gethsemane to Calvary. Yonder is the great shadow approaching nearer and closer, and soon it will shroud that little group of friends in its sable gloom.

Jesus has just instituted the Holy Supper. He is asking His friends to do a thing that will keep them from forgetting Him. He does not want to be forgotten, and so He takes the bread and blesses it, and says: "Take, eat, this is my body which is for you; this do in remembrance of me." After the same manner He takes the cup, and says: "This is the new testament in my blood; all of you drink of it; for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show my death until I come."

He would also give them something as He leaves them. There at the communion table He makes a bequest. He devises His estate to His friends. What legacy can He leave them? What has Jesus to bequeath? He has plenty of trouble. Shall He leave them that? He has plenty of sorrow, of persecution and privation, of want and woe and hardship, of desertion and apparent defeat. He has all this in abundance, and indeed, His friends will speedily come into possession of all this. In a few hours they will be fleeing for their lives, driven hither and thither, hunted down, in prison, slain. Christ could easily have said: "My trouble I leave with you; my trouble I give unto you," and the world would never have tried to break His will.

His bequest, however, was of a very different kind. Let us listen to Him as He devises His estate: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Christ's legacy to His friends was peace, perfect peace. It was the one thing the world was ever trying to take away from Him, but the one thing of which He was in fullest and completest possession when He came to die.

And those men to whom Christ thus devised His blessed peace never for a moment doubted the reality of the bequest. In the years which followed they had trouble, but they also had peace. They

had privations without end, and perils that were ceaseless, but they were ever garrisoned with the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

It is the legacy we need most. Existence is crowded with restlessness and distraction. Life is packed with unrest. There is turmoil and confusion on every side. There is strife and alienation. The storm is on the sea of life. The waves are angry. Oh, for rest! For quiet! For escape from friction and worry! For the Master to stand forth as in the olden times and say to the angry sea: "Peace! Be still!"

Peace is what the world is needing most in these days in which we live. The prayer for peace beats day and night in a tide of ceaseless intercession against the throne of God. It moans across the dying lips of soldiers on the battle-field. It cries out of the hearts of women who have lost their loved ones, and from the stricken faces of children whom the cruel war has orphaned. It shrieks in the scream of bursting shells, and groans in the sullen roar of guns. It pleads with heaven in a dumb pathos from scarred and ruined fields, from valleys once lovely, but now desolate, from forests mowed down by shot to bleeding and unsightly stumps. Oh, for peace! For surcease of strife! For an end to war and bloodshed! For a bit of the communion bequest of the world's best

Friend in these days of the world's greatest trouble!

And peace is possible. It is the one thing that is permanent. Strife has only a temporary tenure. Trouble is like a cloud that cannot last. It is like a shadow that must pass. But peace is the eternal blue in God's sky which clouds may dim, but not destroy. Peace is the star whose shining light all nights cannot quench, for peace is down on God's program for our world, and He Who is to reign forever and ever has said: "Peace I leave with you!"

CHRIST'S PEACE

What is the peace of Christ? It is vastly more than escape and exemption. It is more than having the ache deadened and the trouble put to sleep. Christ's peace is not negative, but positive. It is acquired not by running away from turmoil, but by conquering it. It is not a rotten peace. It is the peace of victory, the serenity of a great conquest.

It is peace amid the storm. You have seen a bird perch on the mast of a ship that was tossed by wild waves; but the bird was not afraid. It is a peace like that. You have seen a star gleam on the edge of a tempest, but the star was undisturbed. It is a peace like that. You have seen the sunshine on a scene that was all confusion and wreck, but the glory of the sunshine was unstained. It is

a peace like that. It is the kind of peace Christ had. Never was there such opposition. The tumult was ever about Him. But He moved on, calm, serene, and undisturbed, for He had a peace the world could not give nor take away. It is the peace of an inward content, of a spiritual joy, of a soul serenity. The dwelling place of happiness is in the heart. The heart draws its nourishment from an unseen source. I have seen a tree growing on the naked cheek of a bare and barren rock on a mountainside. Through storm and sunshine it stands up undisturbed from its barren base, lifting verdant branches which cast a generous shade. I wondered how it lived on such a sterile site, until I discovered hidden roots which lapped around the rock and ran away to rich and mellow soil, and from that hidden oasis by secret lines the tree drew its sustenance. It is so in the life of the soul. Ever and again our lot is bare and barren, but faith connects with hidden resources, and we are sustained.

“ Outward life is light and shadow,
Mingled wrong and struggling right,
But within the outward trouble
Shines a healing, inward light.

“ Not to us may come fulfilment,
Not below our struggles cease,
Yet the heavenly vision gives us,
Even here, an inward peace.”

Christ's peace is that which comes from the great reconciliation. We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son. There is no peace until the soul has peace with God. There is no harmony for anything in the universe until it centres right. Man's soul centres in his Maker. Therefore let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ establishes peace between us and our eternal Father, and once that peace is ours, all worries and distractions lose their power to disturb us.

CLAIM THE BEQUEST

Jesus is still at His table. He is breaking the communion bread. He presses the chalice of His sufferings to the lips of His disciples. He is saying over the old words, and among them is this: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Shall we claim our inheritance? Peace is ours if we will but have it. He has left it to us. The papers tell of a woman who has just come into possession of a fortune. A relative died years ago, leaving a large estate, and she was next of kin. During these years the newspapers had been advertising for her. They had been searching the land trying to find her. But she had moved to an obscure town and changed her name. She was living in obscure poverty while all the time a for-

tune was hers if she would but claim it. Her identity was at last discovered almost by accident. When will the Christian claim his estate, his peerless possession of peace? How God must hunt us out and run us down to give it to us! How He must plead with us to take Christ's communion bequest! Why not take it and be happy?

"Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin:
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.

"Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed:
To do the will of Jesus,—this is rest.

"Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round:
On Jesus' bosom naught but calm is found.

"Peace, perfect peace, with loved ones far away:
In Jesus' keeping we are safe, and they.

"Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown:
Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.

"Peace, perfect peace, death shadowing us and ours:
Jesus has vanquished death and all its powers.

"It is enough; earth's struggles soon shall cease,
And Jesus call us to Heaven's perfect peace."

IX

THE UNION OF COMMUNION

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another as I have loved you."—JOHN 15: 12.

HERE is a sentence from the Saviour's communion address. He is giving His disciples His commandment. He is not repealing His Father's commandments. He is not suggesting that His Father spoke amiss when, amid the gleam and roar of Sinai, He thundered out upon the race the ten great moralities on whose enduring strength the future structure of human society was to be built. He is saying that in addition to these ten words, and in perfect harmony with them, and indeed, as a result of them, He has a law to give. It is this: "That ye love one another as I have loved you."

It is a great commandment. Love is the greatest thing in the world, and Christ's love was the greatest love in the world, and we Christians are to love each other as Christ has loved us. There is nothing higher, holier, diviner than this. It is the tie which is to reunite the dismembered human race. It is the bond which is to bind us into a new

unity. It is the constitution on which is to be organized the kingdom of fraternity. All these are there. Every possible duty is packed into a single line. "Love one another as I have loved you." Let us do that, and nothing remains undone. Let us do everything else, and fail to do that, and life remains woefully incomplete, and duty tumbles down into ruins.

In this commandment Christ foregleams a two-fold union. The first is that between Him and His disciples. The second is that between His disciples and one another. There is first the tie which binds us to Christ, so that Christ and His people are one. Then there is the tie which binds us to each other, so that Christ's people are one. In each case the tie is love. Christ's people are one with Him because He has loved down and out of existence every dividing barrier. Christ's people are one with each other because they love each other as Christ loved them.

This is the union of communion. Declaring it, Christ instituted the Holy Supper to keep it an everlasting sacramental remembrance, so that as often as His followers should meet and break bread among themselves, as often as they should pass the cup, they should symbolize their oneness with Him and their oneness with one another. It is this unity Christ would have His people meditate upon and experience as they partake of the sacred emblems in remembrance of Him.

ONE WITH CHRIST

We are one with the Saviour. His love for us is such an absorbing and compelling passion that it makes us as much a part of Him as our bodies are a part of us.

We are one with Christ, so that if He has any merit, it is as much ours as His. He has all merit. His is the merit of a perfect righteousness, the saintliness that can never come into condemnation. Since we are one with Christ, Christ's merit is ours.

We are one with Christ, so that if He has any standing with God, it is as much ours as His. He has standing with God. He has entered into the "holy of holies." He is our all-prevailing advocate, so that whatever He asks of the Father is done. Our prayers are as prevailing. Marvellous privilege! This is what Christ means when He says: 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'

We are one with Christ, so that if He has any fortune, it is as much ours as His. All things are His. He is the heir of God, and because we are one with Him, we are joint heirs to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that shall never pass away. All that Christ has of honour, of dignity and power, of spiritual resources, is as much ours as His; not because we have earned it, not because we need it; but because He has loved us.

We are one with Christ, so that if He has any future, it is as much ours as His. All the future is in His keeping. He is the King of the destiny of the world. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." The destiny of His people is the same. No wonder we are told that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

This is wonderful. But it is not all. The reverse side of privilege is always obligation. Union is two-sided. Not only is Christ united to us, but we to Him. Consider what this involves. If we have any merit, it is as much His as ours. If we have any standing, any fortune, any future, any influence, any asset of value whatever, it is ever as much His as ours. We are soldiers of fortune together. We are not our own, for we have been bought with a price. We have been purchased by a great love. For this we are to glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are His.

This is the first kind of union the communion proclaims. Why should we be timid and fearful if this be true? Why should we be alarmed as we gaze out into the vast rushing worlds amid which we seem adrift like a mote afloat in a sunbeam? We are not lost. We are part of Christ, and all is well.

ONE WITH ONE ANOTHER

We are also to love down and out of existence all the barriers which separate Christ's people from one another. We are one with one another, so that if any one of us has any merit, it is as much his fellow-Christian's as his own. We are on a level as regards our rights. We must not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. Each must esteem the other better than himself.

We are one with one another, so that if any one has a load to carry, it is as much his fellow-Christian's load as his own. We are to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. One love has made identical all our life interests.

We are one with one another, so that if any one is in peril, in jeopardy or need, either temporal or eternal, it is as much his fellow-Christian's as his own. We are to follow Christ along the road marked by a cross. "As he laid down his life for us, so must we lay down our lives for the brethren." We are one in our hopes and aims, our faiths and loves, our duties and obligations.

Is not this also wonderful? We are brethren. We are not foes, competitors, strangers, chance acquaintances, companions. We are more than ordinary comrades. "All we be brethren." "Our hopes, our fears, our aims are one."

This is what Christ wants His people to be to each other. Is He expecting too much? It would

be a heavenly thing for us to dwell together this way, and act toward each other in accordance with such holy bonds. But is it possible? We live in a practical world. The atmosphere we breathe is saturated with strife and slander and suspicion and sin. Can it be that such fellowship was ever meant for earth?

It is asking much. The union of communion is not an ordinary union. It is not a common tie nor a cheap fellowship. It is high as God, holy as Calvary, enduring as eternity. But we do not regard it as too high when it comes to our union with Christ, or too heavenly when it comes to claiming His merit and standing before God. We feel that our union with Christ is possible because His love for us is so great. If we loved each other as He loves us, it would not be too wild a dream to hope that we might realize here on earth this second kind of union. If we are His true followers, He commands us to love each other after that fashion,—“as he has loved us.”

If Christians would only keep this commandment of love, it would not be necessary for us to be continually trying to invent some new panacea for the ills of the world. There is not much room for starlight when there is sunlight. Cheap schemes to bring about human brotherhood would fall of their own weight if men would only pay a little attention to Christ's scheme. The union of communion is Christ's dream for humanity. It is

Christianity's gospel for social redemption. It is so much better than all others that they cannot even be compared. "This is my commandment, That ye love one another as I have loved you." The world is still far, far behind Christ. People sometimes talk about Christianity being worn out. They speak of its failure. It would be well first to give it a trial.

Christ proposes to light the torch of human progress with the flame of His own holy passion, and teach men to love each other in the same heavenly way that He loves all men. Oh, to learn that lesson! It is the old lesson, the great, high, divine lesson of being brethren. It is about all there is in religion. As we partake of the sacramental symbols, as the old story fills our hearts with its blessed peace, let us pray that we may comprehend with all saints what is the length and breadth, and height and depth, and to know the love of God which passeth knowledge,—that we may love one another as Christ has loved us!

X

THE NEW COMMUNION IN THE KINGDOM

"Until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."—MATTHEW 26: 29.

THIS verse takes us to the communion in the upper room. Jesus is gathered around the table with His friends. Across the table falls the shadow of a cross, and into the hearts of those present comes a vague fear that soon their days of comradeship will be rudely broken. For three happy years they have gone up and down the land together, under the leadership of Jesus, sharing in the service and glory of a ministry that has changed woe to peace. But hostility has dogged their steps, and the night has come for the last act. Soon they must part.

Ere they part, Jesus pledges them to remembrance. He takes bread and wine and consecrates them as the symbols of His passion, and bids His disciples, when they meet, to partake of them in hallowed remembrance of Him. Then for the first time they keep the feast. Jesus keeps it with them. In future they will keep it, and down the centuries Christ's faithful followers will keep it when Christ Himself is present only in the remembrance of the hearts that love Him. But to-night Jesus is there in person, and thus they keep the feast.

He is saying: "This is not the last time I will keep it with you. The day is coming when we shall meet around the table again. Until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." As He said that, the atmosphere of the upper room changed. It became an antechamber to the courts of glory. The little street outside was no longer a blind alley, ending in the shame of a malefactor's cross, but a royal avenue winding to a throne. Jesus will die, but He will live. He will push through the grave, and brush past shades, and shake off the sepulchre.

He will drink it new with them, with the morning light in their faces, with no shadow across the table, with no fear in their hearts, and with nothing to stain or dim the event.

He will drink it with them in the kingdom, not in defeat, but in victory; not hunted by the foe, but serene; not under cover of darkness in an upper room, but on the heights of the free, and in the sunlit open; not with the hirelings of crafty priests crouching outside the door to arrest, but with the songs of the invisible choir, and with the chant of the redeemed; not with a rough cross yonder on an horizon of storm-clouds, but with the white throne, and the light that never fades, and the peace that never dies.

This was the Saviour's promise to His friends there at the communion in the upper room. As they listened, they forgot their hardships. The

cheap room became the palace of the King. Fear faded from their hearts. Peril seemed a thing of the past. The note changed from minor to major, and the song from miserere to jubilate. The transfiguring light of immortal victory fell on their faces, and the fires of an enthusiasm that was never to be quenched flared into flame on the altar of their faith.

“Until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” What did Christ mean by this new communion in the kingdom? Perhaps the usual interpretation is to refer the text to some experience the Christian is to have after death in heaven, and the thought is that after this life of suffering and sorrow, of struggle with temptation, after the turmoil of strife and the conflict of battle and the days of service are over, when there are no more furnace fires to scorch us, and no angry floods to sweep about us, we shall meet. And Jesus will meet with us, and for the sake of old times we shall keep the feast. Just as the old soldiers to-day gather around their camp-fires, and tell the stories of a war long past, so the veterans of the cross will gather with the Captain of their salvation, and with love of auld lang syne in their hearts, they will keep the feast.

I imagine that the substance of this interpretation is true, whether the drapery we paint into it be true or not. Beyond the stretches of toil, there is rest. Beyond the battle-fields, there is victory.

Beyond the hills of struggle, there are the heights of peace. After the long march is home. There in the glory, with victory on our banners, we shall meet and greet each other, and our Divine Leader will appear, and "we shall see Him face to face, and tell the story, saved by grace."

Let us think of this heavenly communion. Are we cast down and discouraged, fiercely tempted and sorely tried? Are we weary and well-nigh spent? Let us dwell on the hour when all this will be behind us. Now we drink the cup in weakness, but some day we shall drink it with frailty all gone; now in sorrow, but some day with the tears wiped away; now with Satan dogging our steps, but some day with Satan in chains forever; now with the sound of battle, but some day with cheers of triumph, and the faces of home, and the songs of everlasting peace.

And yet I wonder, after all, if this is precisely what Jesus meant when He said: "Until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." If so, of course the heavenly communion will be one, not so much of remembrance, as of reunion. Perhaps as we think of this communion in heaven, it seems shadowy and far-off. Is there not a nearer and more tangible communion that Christ had in mind? I think there is, for Jesus' ministry concerned itself not so much with making dead people happy as with making living people God's children.

Jesus came to establish His kingdom in this world, to bring about changes in human society, to lead men to treat each other right. He speaks of this over and over again. It is a kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy, whose one law is the largeness of love. It is a kingdom of peace, when war drums throb no longer, and battle flags are furled, when all men shall be brothers, when the Son of Man will no longer be a lonely figure, but every life will project itself along the lines of His character and ministry.

Such a state of society seems a long way off, but it is nearer than it was, and nearer because Jesus has been living in this world for nineteen hundred years. The kingdom is coming. Governments are changing from despotism to republics. War is yielding to international arbitration. The standards of trade are more ethical. Human life is held in higher esteem. Womanhood and childhood are invested with an added sanctity. Delinquents are treated, not so much as criminals, but rather as the victims of vicious influences for which they are not always responsible. For two thousands years we have been praying: "Thy kingdom come," and

"It's coming yet, for a' that,
When man to man the warl' o'er
Shall brithers be,
And a' that."

This is the meaning of world missions. It is a way Christianity has of saying that our brothers and sisters in Africa and China must share in the blessings of the kingdom.

When the kingdom has come, when fraternity is established, when mankind are brothers, when brotherhood is no longer a dream but a world-reality, Christ says He will "drink the cup new." As we gather in that fraternity, as we meet in the fellowship and glory of perfect brotherhood, we shall discover as we look around the table and gaze into each other's faces, that Christ is with us.

There is an old legend that once the Great Spirit visited the Indians whose home was in the foothills of the White Mountains, and that departing, he promised to visit them again. And that they might recognize him on his return, he fixed his image in the stone face of the mountain. It is said that one old Indian thought of the promise by day, dreamed of it by night, and looked often and anxiously into the faces of his brothers, to see whether he might distinguish the features of the Great Spirit. At last, when the nation had been purified by war, they looked into the face of this old prophet, and saw there the lineaments of the Great Spirit, who had come back and taken up his residence in the life of his devoted follower.

It is something like this on a finer and grander and diviner scale which our God has done for us. He visited the race in the Person of the Son of

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Man, and departing, left with us the promise of His return; and through the centuries His faithful followers have been thinking of the promise by day, and dreaming of it by night, and ever and again voicing the prayer: "O Lord, tarry not, but come."

Some day when the world has been purified by peace, when the kingdom has come, when fraternity has been established, men shall look into each other's faces, and find there the image of their Lord, Who has come back and taken up His residence in the lives of those who are possessed of His spirit.

This is the new communion in the kingdom. It is toward this that the Gospel moves. This is the great consummation. For this the Christian is living. His motives are from on high. His citizenship is in the kingdom. He is saved by hope, and hope is beholding the vision of the kingdom, and living as though the kingdom were a reality.

A generation ago, visitors from America in Florence were visiting the studio of Hiram Powers, that gifted son of the Green Mountains, who in his fine work produced busts and statues and medallions which rivalled the Greek masters. In his rooms might be found the idealization of some of America's most famous statesmen and soldiers. There was the model of Liberty for the summit of the Capitol at Washington, of the California pioneer and the Massachusetts Puritan.

One day a visitor from America said to Mr. Powers: "When were you in America last?" Smiling, he replied: "Some thirty years ago." "Then how is it that you manage to keep so well in touch with American life?" he was asked; and he answered: "I have never been out of touch with America itself. For thirty years I have eaten and slept in Italy, but I have never lived anywhere but in the United States."

And so the Christian eats and sleeps in this age of strife and turmoil and conflict, but he is living in the kingdom. The motives of the kingdom drive his life; and some day, under the spell and service of the men and women who have caught a vision, the kingdom will be here, and the world will be ready for the new communion. What a communion that will be, when men shall hate each other no more, when

"There is neither East nor West,
Border nor breed nor birth,"

but all are one in Christ! Christ will show Himself among His friends again, and as He looks around the table, He will say: "At last I see of the travail of my soul, and am satisfied. The long waiting is over. My prayer is answered. All that the Father has given me have come to me. Grace has conquered and love has won."

While Christ will be there, it will still be a feast of remembrance, for as we look back on the ages

of conflict, on the overthrow of hoary errors, on the fallen lifted and the sorrowing comforted and sickness healed, we shall see that Christ has brought it all about. His cross has won the victory. His love has cast the spell that has changed the world. And as we lift the chalice of that new communion in the kingdom to our lips, every heart will adore Him, and the song of the feast will still be:

“Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all.”

XI

THE NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

"And he began to teach them, that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."—MARK 8: 31.

CHRIST declared that His resurrection was a necessity. We are in the habit of placing it on a lower plane. Sometimes we defend it as possible, and try to prove that it may have happened; sometimes as probable, and we try to show that it likely happened; sometimes as actual, and we try to prove its reality. Jesus takes His resurrection out of the possible and probable, and even out of the actual realm, into that of the absolute, and says the resurrection was unavoidable.

We are in the habit of regarding the cross as a necessity. We say that it was necessary for Christ to die. But there are those who think of the resurrection as blessed, if true; but who say that whether it be true or not, we have the cross; and so they brush the resurrection aside as unimportant. Calvary was the great reality, Easter morning but the airy fabric of a poet's dream. Such

men would do well to sit longer at the feet of the great Teacher, Who said: "The Son of man must rise again."

The cross made the resurrection a necessity. If Christ did not rise, His death was defeat, and our preaching vain. Calvary was not an atonement, but an execution. But if Christ arose, then Christ died as a sacrifice, and not as a victim, and every soul that trusts in Him is saved.

The resurrection is a necessity because of the race. If Christ rose not, we are of all men the most miserable. Death is an awful void. But if Christ rose, we shall rise also. We shall meet again the loved "whom we have lost a while." Indeed, we have never lost them. The Saviour's words: "I go to prepare a place for you" are not an echo from the pulseless dust to mock our despair, but hope's harbinger to every broken heart.

Christ's heavenly ministry makes His resurrection a necessity. He did not complete His work as the world's Redeemer when He expired on the cross. He finished His expiatory work, but the ministry of intercession remains. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." But if Christ did not rise, there is no intercession. No one represents us at the throne. We have nothing but our weak arms and pious moods. The grim foe we face laughs us to scorn, and makes doom certain. Religion is a canting pantomime, and existence a horrible nightmare.

Christ's kingdom makes His resurrection a necessity. Kingdom means a king. Christ promised His disciples to return, but if He did not rise, He will never come back. The slopes of Olivet will never thrill again at the touch of His blessed feet. The shades of Gethsemane will never again robe Him with reverent silence as He prays. The eastern sky will never more empurple and change to gold at the glory of His coming. His people will wait in vain for the sound of His voice and the spell of His presence, for He is gone forever.

Do you begin to see why Jesus said, not merely: "I must suffer, I must be rejected, I must be killed," but also: "I must rise again; I must rise to make the cross a crown, to make the tomb aflame with light for all who follow Me; to make death a door, and the sepulchre an entry into life; to clear the way to the throne, where I may pray my people into power. I must rise for the kingdom"? And He did.

Therefore it is the risen and living Christ we remember in the sacrament which celebrates His death. If Christ were not risen, the Holy Supper would plunge us into melancholy and despair. Because He is risen, it fills us with the courage of an immortal hope.

XII

THE GLORIOUS DEATH

"Signifying by what death he should glorify God."

—JOHN 21:19.

IT is possible for one to glorify God by the way he lives, and unless he does, he is not likely to glorify God by the way he dies. Death-bed repentance is within the range of possibility, to be sure, but there is not much credit in such a course. If one's life shames God, his death is not likely to glorify Him; but if his life be right, it is possible not only for one to glorify God by the way he dies, but to make death his supreme and crowning tribute to his Redeemer.

It is something like this that Christ meant when, speaking to Peter, He signified by what death He should glorify God. On the whole, Peter's life had been to God's glory. To be sure, there were some dark spots. There was the failure of his faith when he walked on the water to go to Jesus. There was the hour when his boasting outran his conduct. There was the dark night of apostasy and denial. But there had been repentance, and Peter had rallied and become a new man. But Jesus says to him: "Your great chance is yet to come. It will come when you are face to face with death. Then is the hour when you will win your crown."

While Jesus said this about a disciple, in a fuller and truer sense He could have said it of Himself. He was just from the cross and the tomb. Recently He had died. He had hung on Calvary and slept in Joseph's garden, and He comes back from it all to say that death is not humiliation and defeat, but opportunity and achievement. It is glorious.

THE PENAL SCAR

Christ bore a penal scar. He was put to death with ignominy. He suffered the shameful death of the cross. In all the history of human punishment and torture, it is doubtful if there has ever been devised a method of capital punishment more barbarous, more humiliating to its victim, with more of torture in its experience than death by crucifixion, and Christ was crucified. To add to the infamy of this penal scar, to deepen His shame and humiliation, and to intensify His defeat, Jesus was crucified between two common thieves. As if to make mockery of His sufferings, the soldiers who drove the nails into His quivering flesh and thrust the spear into His blessed side and pressed the thorn crown on His holy brow and guarded the spot lest some friend should do something to mitigate His pain or relieve His distress sat down before the cross on which hung the dying Christ and gambled for His seamless robe.

How can Christ ever throw off such a defeat?

It would seem that the penal scar of Calvary is there to stay, that the disgrace and obliquy which His enemies put upon Him in His death would either cover His name with oblivion or stain it with a perpetual infamy. It has done neither.

THE GLORIOUS TRIUMPH

Christ's death was His supreme and glorious triumph. It was His sublimest opportunity to glorify God, for Jesus came to die. He taught and preached, He worked miracles and shared man's lot, but He came to die. The cross was His goal. Death for Him, therefore, was not defeat, but achievement. His enemies thought they were putting Him to death as a common criminal. In reality they were assisting at His coronation, for they were doing what the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God had foreordained.

Christ's death was His sublimest act of obedience to the divine will. Jesus placed His foot on the summit stair of service there at Calvary. He came to do the Father's will. He was doing it in every act and word and expression of His life. In all there was perfect harmony. But there at the cross was the supreme test. The prayer of Gethsemane was still trembling on His lips: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." Into the shadow He went with the cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It sounds like an

echo from the Old Testament. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." "This he said, signifying by what death he should glorify God."

Christ's death was His glorious triumph because by it He revealed to men the fact that God was a Father. It was this that He came to accomplish. He said: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." There is nothing that so glorifies God as this discovery not that God has power and wisdom and knowledge and holiness and truth, but that He is a Father. There on the cross Jesus made the supreme revelation of God. He scattered the mists. He tore away the veil. He let us gaze full upon the uncovered face of deity, and as the spirit beheld, it cried: "Abba Father!"

Christ's triumphant death gives back to God His wayward, wandering children. His death was the atonement, the at-one-ment, the great reconciliation. By His stripes we are healed. His blood cleanses us from all sin. Through Christ's death the lost sinner is saved. What a chant rises from the ransomed throng who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and who sing: "Glory and honour and power be unto him!" And they sing thus signifying by what death He should glorify God!

THE ADORATION OF THE CROSS

The world has long since come to worship the penal scars of the crucified Christ. Jesus Who

died on Calvary is the Hero of the race. Everything looks His way. He is the Leader and Saviour of mankind. His name is above every name, and His kingdom of fraternity and peace is the dream of the nation.

Christ is the world's Hero because He died,—not because He was cradled in Bethlehem, not because He lived in Nazareth as the Son of a carpenter, not because He walked the dusty roads and climbed the rough mountainsides and suffered with the poor and the needy, but because He walked the winding thorn-path to the cross-crowned hill, and there laid down His life. For this we adore Him. His disciples did not try to hide the fact that He died. They proclaimed it. Woe to the Church should it ever come to obscure or apologize for the death of Christ!

It is the cross that is the symbol of power,—not the manger cradle, not the sunshine throne, but the cross, the blood-stained, shadowed cross on which He died. It is the cross that crowns our church spires with hope. It is the cross that waves on our battle flags. And it is the cross we wear on our hearts.

It is the death of Christ we hallow in the communion. The sacramental symbols speak to us not so much of the morn when the startled shepherds came nor of the night when the wise men knelt at the stable shrine nor of the hour when the multitudes thronged Him by the lakeside nor of the

day He made His triumphal entry through the waving palms into Jerusalem, but of that dark hour when the sun hid its face and the dead walked the earth and Jesus hanging between heaven and earth gave His life a ransom for many. "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

Let us not obscure the cross nor make little of that of which Christ makes much. Let us not fear death, not because death is unreal, but because it is real, because being real, Christ has tasted death for every man, and by making death tell the story of God's love, and by making death open wide to sinners the gates of life, has made death glorious.

What is Christ's death to me? I study His teachings, admire His example, praise the Sermon on the Mount, proclaim the kingdom of fraternity, but what is it to me that He Who said all this and did all this, Who gave the world the secret of the new heavens and the new earth, and Who lived the fairest life the world has known, hung in loneliness on a cross and poured out His life unto death? What is it to me that Christ died, died for me?

Let us gather around the cross and speak in whispers and say to our hearts: "He died for me." Let us look on the penal scars of Calvary and worship Him. As we see the print of the nails let us adore Him. As we see the halo on His brow and the love light in His face, as we eat the bread and drink the cup to show forth His death, let our

hearts be singing the old song of a green hill far
away, where Jesus died

“—that we might be forgiven
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by His precious blood!”

XIII

TAKING CHRIST FROM THE CROSS

"He came therefore and took the body of Jesus."

—JOHN 19:38.

THIS verse hangs two pictures on the wall. The first is the picture of Christ in the hands of His enemies. They are nailing Him to the cross. The rude scaffold is silhouetted against the sky. To the cross on the right with heavy thongs they bind a thief. To the cross on the left they do likewise. Then they lift the central cross from its place, and laying it down on the ground they stretch their victim on its gaunt timbers, and instead of thongs they drive the nails through His quivering flesh. Then they lift the tree with its human burden, and with a jar of keenest torture they drop the cross to its place.

CHRIST IN THE HANDS OF HIS ENEMIES

For three long hours Christ hung there between heaven and earth in sacrificial expiation for human guilt. The blistering sun beat down on His fevered, aching body, until He cried: "I thirst!" The crowd of sightseers went by wagging their heads and saying: "He saved others, himself he cannot save." His executioners sat down before

the suffering Christ, and gambled for His garments. Above all this from the pale lips of the crucified came the prayer: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" And one who saw all this was converted, until across his lips, stained often with profanity, passed the prayer: "Remember me!" And a Roman soldier who was enough of a man to scorn hypocrisy and worship heroism looked up into Christ's face and said: "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Then by and by the little group of friends watching yonder in the distance draw nearer until they talk to Him and look through streaming eyes into the face they love. Among them is His mother, she who held Him in her arms that wondrous night the shepherds came, who saw the homage of the Magi for her Hero Child, who noted His every act and word during those happy years at Nazareth and followed Him always with her heart. This is the tragic end of it all. As they wait there while the shadows deepen about them Jesus safeguards the future of His human mother as He gives her to John's care, saying: "Woman, behold thy son," and then to John: "Behold thy mother." Then He seems to turn from His human mother to His divine Father, only to find the face turned away, until in His loneliness He cries: "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Soon the worn body falls into the arms of death waiting to receive it, but in that moment the spirit evades death,

and while leaving His body in death's arms, Christ cries: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." "And having said this, he gave up the ghost." "It is finished." The price has been paid. Christ has died on the cross. Directly a Roman soldier in wanton brutality will drive his spear into the dead Christ's side, and there will pour out blood mingled with water. The Saviour's heart was broken.

CHRIST IN THE HANDS OF HIS FRIENDS

The second picture is that of Christ in the hands of His friends. They are taking Him from the cross. Who will have courage enough for that sublime devotion? He must risk his own life who attempts it. He must brave the crowd which this morning shouted: "Crucify Him!" He must face the hate which drove the nails into His hands. One must jeopardize his position, his property, life itself, to stand by that central cross and say to Annas and Caiaphas and Pilate and Herod and the mob: "You have killed Him, but though He be dead, I worship Him still!" Where are those who will risk all to save the body of Christ from a pauper's grave?

Who will have influence enough to secure permission from Christ's enemies to pay such a tribute to the memory of Jesus? Doubtless His disciples at last are ready to die for Him; they will face the crowd and say what needs to be said, even

though it may mean that they must walk to-morrow the sorrowful way to their own Calvary. But they are without influence. Should they ask Pilate for the body of Jesus, his answer would doubtless be to order them to jail. The petition must come from a man whose standing is such that Pilate will cringe.

Thus it was that Joseph of Arimathea is the disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, who finds himself, and shaking off his timidity, emerges into the open. In the hour of his Master's defeat, Joseph proclaims his faith. He is wealthy and influential, and at last he is courageous. He goes to Pilate and begs the dead body of Jesus. Then with Nicodemus, another secret disciple who had come to Jesus by night, but who is going now in the blazing day in the fierce light of the sensation that was sweeping Jerusalem, Joseph of Arimathea goes to take Christ from the cross.

Doubtless these two men had other of Christ's disciples to assist them in this blessed ministry. Tenderly and lovingly they lift the dear form from that scaffold of expiation. Reverently they prepare it for entombment. Then Joseph says: "Yonder in my garden amid the blooming flowers under the hillside is the tomb in which I had thought my own body might rest when at last God bids me come. The sepulchre is new. It is hewn from the solid rock. It is undefiled, for in it was man never yet laid. It overlooks the valley and

commands the distant hills, and around the door the vines are climbing and near by the lilies soon will be in blossom. Let us lay His precious body there."

Thus they took Christ's body from the cross and laid it in Joseph's tomb. These are the two pictures which hang before our faith,—the picture of Christ in the hands of His enemies and the picture of Christ in the hands of His friends.

IN WHICH PICTURE?

Every one of us is in one or the other of these pictures. On must take some attitude toward Christ. He must be either for Him or against Him, for Christ is unavoidable.

Are we nailing Him to the cross? The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of those who crucify the Son of God afresh. They make Calvary continuous. They prolong the crucifixion scene and lengthen it out on the canvas of time. We are told who these are. They were once enlightened. They have tasted of the heavenly gift. They were made partakers of the Holy Ghost. They have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come. But they have fallen away from all this. They have despised and rejected the values there presented, and doing so, they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame.

It was bad enough to crucify Christ the first

time, to be a Pilate, a Caiaphas, to be the soldiers who drove the nails and cast lots for His robe, to belong to the crowd who passed by wagging their heads. But to do this now after all the light and love of two thousand years have rested on that scene is to incur a greater condemnation. Can it be possible for one thus to treat Jesus? Surely I could never nail Him to the cross, and yet he that is not for is against.

Let us pray that we may be of the company of those who took Christ from the cross. Have we enough courage for that devotion, enough heroism to face the world and say: "This despised and rejected man is my Saviour! Let men think of Him or of me. He is my glorious Redeemer. For His dear name I will live, and should He need it, I trust I may have grace for His glorious cause to die!"

Christ would have us take Him from the cross. He has paid our debt. The atonement is finished. The work on Calvary is complete, but not His work among men. He is to leave the cross for the street, the home, the school, the office, the world, and we who are His friends must take Him there.

He would have us take Him from the cross, not lay Him in another splendid tomb, as I fear we sometimes imagine, in some grand cathedral which is in reality a mausoleum. What He wants is for His people to translate Him, His ideals, His love,

His strength, His law of sacrifice, His sympathy and tenderness and forgiveness into the life of this weary, sin-smitten world.

We are to take Him from the cross to the throne. He is to reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. He is to found a kingdom, to wear a crown and wield a sceptre. The cross merely marks the road to power, and to His disciples is given the act not of entombment but of enthronement and of coronation.

THE MESSAGE OF COMMUNION

The holy communion speaks to us of both pictures. It speaks of Christ on the cross. These sacramental symbols are a picture story of His passion. They tell us how He suffered. If we listen to them, they will tell us all that is in the first picture, of how He died. They tell us that He died for us that we might be forgiven, redeemed, and made the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

It also speaks to us of taking Christ from the cross. The message of the risen Christ was: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." This, too, is the message of the emblems. The Christ Who died must live. We must preach Him until He lives in every man and in every land and in all the life of the world. We must put Him on the throne until the kingdoms of the world are His kingdoms. We must make

Christ King. In the observance of the sacrament the heart that loves Christ is singing under its breath: "Oh, sacred Head, once wounded," but it is also singing in sublime expectation:

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run."

XIV

THE HUMAN CHRIST

"And Jesus went forth and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick."—MATTHEW 14: 14.

JESUS was worn out with His work. He was trying to get away from the crowd for a bit of rest. His nerves were on edge. He must have quiet and a chance to relax from the awful strain and tax the insistent and ceaseless throngs made on Him. And so He turns His face toward the desert. Scarcely have His tired body and spent spirit yielded to repose when there they are. The crowds have invaded His desert. They are violating His sanctuary, swarming about Him, clamouring to see Him, demanding His attention. They will give Him no rest.

What did Jesus say? Did He issue an order to drive them away? Did He say: "These people have no consideration. They are selfish. They are pitiless. They would have me die in my tracks. I have done enough. I am worn out. Send them away. Tell them to be quiet. Stop their noise that I may sleep. Get rid of them somehow, for I must rest"?

Had we been in His place, it is something like this we would have said. We have little patience with any one who disturbs our repose. A bill was once introduced into the Legislature of North Carolina forbidding the running of trains at night on a certain branch of the Southern Railway, because the noise of the trains disturbed the rest of a certain wealthy and well-known citizen of the old North State. Few are influential enough to secure legislation that will paralyze public traffic for their private benefit. And yet when worn out with work, and with nerves on edge, one does feel he has a right to a bit of quiet. Nevertheless, Jesus never thought of Himself. The crowds have broken in on His rest. How does He take it? "And Jesus went forth and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick."

THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST

When Jesus looked out on the crowd, He saw plenty to criticize, much that was wrong, a lot that was selfish, not a little that was vile.

He saw Sabbath-breakers, people who had no respect for the Fourth Commandment, who made the day of rest a season of godless gain and pleasure. Some seem to regard Sabbath desecration as a modern iniquity. It is the most ancient of transgressions.

He saw people who were dishonest in business,

who did not hesitate to cheat and lie in order to make money, who overcharged, who profiteered, who were not willing to pay their honest debts, who were guilty of duplicity and rascality. These things went on in the good old days that are gone.

He saw corrupt politicians. We think some of the political deals of our day register the last act in the betrayal of a public trust, but present-day politics is a Sunday-school affair in comparison with what went on in Christ's time.

He saw worldliness. He saw the vain show. He saw people who sat down to eat and to drink, and who rose up to play. He saw the revel of Bacchus and the riot of passion. It was a day when a dancing girl won as her trophy the dripping head of John the Baptist, when the ritual of religion consisted in the practice of the rites of the goddess of lust.

He saw hypocrisy. He saw men wearing the livery of heaven to serve the devil in. He saw rascality piously veneering itself, and scoundrels hiding behind the skirts of priests, and hands stained with crime serving at the altar, and lips foul with blasphemy reciting the creed. He saw much to criticize. But the strange thing is that no criticism fell from His lips.

He was moved with compassion. He was touched with pity. He was filled with a sadness that sometimes could express itself only in tears. The sin of the world did not make Him bitter.

Christ was not censorious. The only things which ever stirred Him to anger and denunciation were bigotry and hypocrisy. Even these did not lead Him to gather His garments about Him with a "holier-than-thou" attitude to life and withdraw from the crowd. Instead of drawing back, He pushed in where the crowd was, right into the thick of soiled and stained and defeated humanity.

This does not mean that He was tolerant toward sin. How could He be? He came to fight it, to disarm it of its power, to destroy its hold on human life, to die Himself on the accursed cross that He might lift from its victims the curse of sin. One does not understand the compassion of Jesus who thinks it means a pale morality. Christ was sinless. With Him, holiness was a passion. The pitiful Christ was pitiless toward sin.

But He was patient with the sinner. He distinguished between sin and the sinner. It is a distinction we sometimes fail to make, and failing, we become critical and censorious instead of compassionate. We stand off with a self-righteous air and deliver ourselves of a gloomy jeremiad of our times, of a bitter tirade against our fellow-men, of a fierce denunciation of the sins and shortcomings of Sabbath-breakers and profiteers, of grafters and worldlings and hypocrites. The result is, we leave the sick world as sick and sad and hopeless as we found it. It was not so with Jesus. He saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion.

THE HELPING CHRIST

Jesus helped people because He had compassion on them. This was His method of treatment. It was His prescription for a broken and desperate and despairing world. He administered patience and love. Read the Gospel story. Now He sees the people as sheep not having a shepherd, and He has compassion. Now it is a leper, ostracized from his kind, and He has compassion. Yonder two blind men are crying for mercy, and He has compassion. Here is a stained girl from the street, and Jesus sees her and has compassion on her.

He has compassion because He sees in every sinner God's child, estranged, wayward, lost, but still with the tracery of the Father there. He sees in every rich man Zaccheus, a potential philanthropist. He sees in labouring men what He saw in the fishermen of Galilee, apostles, evangelists, world-builders. He saw in the bedeviled demoniac of the tomb not a poor creature to be sent to an insane asylum, but a human being to be emancipated, and who, when clothed and in his right mind, was to become a witness for his Redeemer. He saw in the girl of the street not an outcast to be stoned by society's cold and merciless throng, but one who might become an angel of mercy. He saw in the thief on the cross a citizen of Paradise. All this He saw because He was moved with compassion.

Jesus saw this godlike side of life being ignored,

repressed, despised, retarded, proscribed, defeated. This is what saddened Him. And He saw that the way to release it and to enable it to gain the ascendancy in the soul was not to turn upon it the fierce wrath of God, but to summon it with gentle love. Hence as Jesus moved among men, He did more than rebuke them, more than condemn. He had compassion on them, and saved them. He helped them to find themselves and become the sons and daughters of their Heavenly Father.

THE HUMAN CHRIST

Jesus had compassion because He was human. At first blush this statement may be challenged, but reflection will vindicate it. Jesus was "tempted in all points like as we are." He was widely human. His experience swept the whole gamut of human life. Therefore He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He can feel as we feel, and feeling thus, He has compassion. This is the great lesson of the incarnation. It is godhood becoming human. It is not godhood becoming censorious and denunciatory, but human. I was talking one day with a Jew who had accepted Christ in one of my meetings. He was describing how Christ appealed to him. He said: "Jesus has humanized the religion of the Old Testament." It seemed to me a fine characterization of the purpose of the incarnation. Christ did not found a new religion, but He did humanize the religion of the Old Tes-

tament. Some people are living back there. They are hard, hard as Sinai. Jesus did not repeal the moral law, but He did humanize it. He did say: "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

And so, as He looks out on the crowd, Jesus sees people, not the multitude, but men and women and children, not social units, but fathers and mothers and husbands and wives and brothers and sisters and neighbors and friends. He singles us out of the crowd. He sees the old man moving with slow step down life's last hill, and sympathizes with his attitude to life. He sees the mother crooning over a baby in her arms, and understands her yearning and hope. He sees the father as he says good-bye to the boy who is leaving home, and knows all that gathers around that parting. He sees the labourer as he leaves for his work in the morning, and enters with him into his day of toil. He sees the criminal behind the bars, and enters into sympathy with him. And because Jesus sees all this, not merely civilization and laws and nations, but people, He has pity.

He sees this because He is so human. His humanity is big, high, wide, capacious, tender. Here is the great proof of His godhood. There are those, perhaps, who believe in Jesus because of His miracles. I believe in the miracles because of Jesus. Christ is the greatest argument for Christianity. When He asked Peter: "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" Peter replied:

“Son of God!” He seems to say: “Thou art so human, Thy humanity is so big, so racial, so sublime, so all-embracing, that Thou art more than Son of Man: Thou art God!”

It is this gentle, human Christ Who comes to meet us as we gather around the holy table. He would sit with us here at the feast. He would be as friendly with us as with that little group on the night of the first supper. He is our Redeemer, but He is our Elder Brother, too. He is our closest comrade, and always with us.

There are a lot of lonely people in the world, and perhaps because they are lonely, some of them are bad. God made us to be social beings. Solitude is hell. The prodigal reached the depths when “no man gave unto him.” Some one has painted a picture of two polar bears on a field of ice. One of the bears is dead, starved to death in the bleak Arctic world, and his mate stands beside him looking down with an expression, not of fear so much as of pain. The artist calls his picture “Solitude.” When one feels that none is left to care, it is a frozen world, and there is nothing left but death. What people need to-day is friendship and sympathy. It is the human Christ Who heals the hurts of humanity, and He heals them by being human. It is divine to be human.

XV.

THE DIVINE CHRIST

"Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."—PHILIPPIANS 2:6.

THE word "divinity" has been greatly cheapened. There are those who admit the divinity of Christ, but who deny His deity. There are those who admit that Christ is divine, but who claim that man is also divine. If Christ is divine only as we are, then He was a good man, but no more, and He has no more claim on our remembrance than thousands of others who have loved and served and suffered and died. It is a God we remember at the Holy Supper.

LAYING ASIDE HIS GODHOOD

And yet Christ's first act as the world's Redeemer was to lay His godhood aside. It is a strange and arresting thing said by Paul in his letter to the Philippians; in speaking of Christ, he declares: "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." The American revision translates it: "Being on an equality with God." And Dr. Moffatt uses the luminous phrase: "Though He was divine by nature, He did

not snatch at equality with God, but emptied Himself." All of these translations, however, are but different ways of saying that in His earthly ministry Jesus deliberately laid His godhood aside. He did not draw on His divine powers to protect and sustain Himself during the period of His temptation and suffering. His human experience was real. His agony on the cross was actual. Jesus was not an actor playing a part. He was a self-elected sufferer vicariously enduring the penalty of sin for the human race.

Because He laid His godhood aside in facing His passion, we are not to conclude that He had any doubt about His deity. He was so certain of that that He could afford to empty Himself. Neither are we to conclude that in any sense He ceased to be God. How could He? One can refrain from exercising certain powers which he possesses, but he does not thereby cease to be himself. Nor does it mean that He did not exercise these powers for others. Indeed it was just this Christ did in His divine nature, and this constituted the pathos and grandeur of His ministry. He fed the multitudes, but He declined to change one stone to bread to end His own fast. He healed the wounds of others, but He refused to staunch His own. He raised Lazarus from the dead, but He declined to protect Himself against death. This course was not accidental. It was intentional. Christ was not a victim. He was a victor.

And so this strange line reciting the descent of a God into the valley of humiliation does not stop with the descent. It also chants His ascent toward the heights of exaltation. Indeed, when we understand aright Christ's descent, it was itself an ascent. Jesus was none the less God in the valley than on the heights. The human Christ being so capaciously, so transcendantly human, could be none other than the divine Christ. And so Paul paints both portraits. "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

"Wherefore God hath still highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

RECOGNIZING HIS GODHOOD

The godhood of Jesus is not something for us to lay aside. Perhaps some one may ask: "How do you know that Jesus is God?" I might answer: "I believe it. I believe some things I do not know. My faith is that Jesus is divine as well as human."

But if this faith is not to be condemned as credulity, it must prove its reasonableness. I think it can."

I believe in the godhood of Jesus because of the teachings of the Bible. It is sometimes said that the Bible does not anywhere say that Jesus is God. One may admit that the Bible does not argue the deity of Christ. It assumes it. It takes it for granted, and in certain passages, like the prelude to John's Gospel, it declares it in the clearest and most unmistakable language.

The Bible is trustworthy. It has been tried and tested and assailed as no other book, and it has come out of all conflicts victorious. Shall we decline to accept its testimony? Shall we accept what pleases us and reject of the Book what we dislike? Shall we accept what it says about the human Christ and reject what it says about the divine Christ? You cannot treat the Bible that way. You cannot claim what suits you and repudiate what disturbs you.

I believe in the godhood of Jesus because He said things which only a God has a right to say. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "I and my Father are one." "I am the bread of life." "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, you shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." These words do not sit well on the lips of a mere man, but if Jesus is God, they are what we would expect Him to say.

I believe in His deity because He did things which only a God has power to do. He worked miracles. He healed disease. He cast out devils. He raised the dead. He rose from the dead. One may say He did all this because He had a profounder insight into the working of nature's laws. No doubt there is much of truth in the statement. Probably if we knew what Jesus knew we might do many of the things He did. And we might find that much which now seems miraculous was merely the working out of higher laws. Nevertheless, is it not strange that Jesus was the only man with this knowledge? How did that peasant Jew, unlettered, back in that dim age, acquire all this knowledge? Where was ever a school that could teach what Jesus knew? It taxes faith more to believe that He was a mere man who did this than it does to believe in His deity.

I believe in His godhood because no other man has ever been what Jesus was. He is admitted to be the one perfect man in human history. There was a moral grandeur about His character that has never been matched. He towers high above all the other teachers. He had a big and intimate understanding of human nature. In the most provincial land and of a most provincial race, He Himself was cosmopolitan. He had a self-effacement that is the despair of others. If He is only human, why is He the only human to be this? Why are we not growing other men bigger and better? I be-

lieve in His godhood because He is unmatched among men.

Not only so, but Jesus is doing what no other man can do. He died on the cross two thousand years ago and was buried, but in His name men leave all, endure all, attempt all. Through faith in Him the world is getting better. Sinners are changing. Human nature is regenerated. Sorrow is comforted. Calamity is courageously faced. Defeat is changed to victory. Why are not other men able to inspire this in their followers? Mohammed, Confucius, Buddha, have left a dead world in their trail, but Jesus is the light and life of men.

Is not this enough to vindicate one's faith against a charge of credulity when he reverently declares: "I believe that Jesus is God!" But this is not all. There comes a time when those who do His will can say: "I know whom I have believed." I am as certain of the godhood of Christ as I am of any fact not susceptible of mathematical demonstration. I know He is God through experience. This is the highest certitude. The senses may deceive us, the soul, never.

The argument for the deity of Christ is simple. Either He is God or He is not. If He is not, He was either deceived about Himself or He was deceiving others about Himself. He was either mentally unbalanced or an impostor. No one who studies the teachings of Jesus can accept either of

those alternatives. Then Jesus was God. But the soul wants more than argument. It wants conviction and assurance, and these come not as the result of a mental process but of a life-experience.

CLAIMING HIS GODHOOD

The godhood of Jesus is something to claim. Let us not be so absorbed with trying to prove that Jesus is God that we shall fail to appropriate the glorious truth. The Bible does not attempt to prove that Jesus is God. It grandly proceeds on the premise of His deity. On the last great day of the feast Jesus stood and said: "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink." He would have us approach Him, recognize Him that He is very God and abundantly able to supply all our needs.

If Jesus is God, He can and will keep His promises. We can bank on them. All that He taught is true. All that He said about God and the hereafter is dependable. If He is only man, He may be mistaken, but if He is God, there is certainty.

If Jesus is God, He can save us. He can forgive our sins and change our natures. He can give us power to become the children of God. He can underwrite destiny. If He is merely a man, His influence is vague, but if God, He is the mighty Redeemer.

If Jesus is God, His cause will triumph. Nothing can defeat it. The world will come His way.

Indeed, it is coming His way. Slowly but surely civilization is being constructed in accordance with His teachings. If Jesus is merely a man, there is no more hope for the triumph of His teachings than for those of any other good man, but if He be God, His cause is scheduled for victory, and against it the gates of hell shall not prevail.

Why not claim the godhood of Christ and make it a part of your creed? There is nothing to lose, but much to gain. It is better to have a great Christ than a small one. What if there are doubts? Is it not better to follow faith than doubts? Unitarianism has nothing to offer that the old Gospel does not offer, but there is much that it would take away. Why be reduced? If one is to take chances either way, is it not better to take them on the side of our hopes than of our fears?

There is no drawing power in a negation. There is no lifting and inspiring power in a denial. What the world needs is not negations, but positions. Society has nothing to fear from faith in the deity of Christ. Perhaps some one may say that it has nothing to fear from a denial of His deity. But has it anything to hope from such denial? There can be no great expectations from a cult that engages to do for one only what he can do for himself. The sinner needs a Saviour who has power, who is able to reach down and lift up, who can transform the individual, who is able to save unto the uttermost. Such is Jesus.

If Jesus is God, the supernatural becomes natural. I can understand how He did what is recorded of Him. I am not puzzled by what has been going on ever since. I have an explanation of the marvellous achievements of those early disciples. I am not surprised that they faced the dungeon and stake without a fear, and that the gospel on their lips, weak men though they were, conquered the earth. But if Jesus was merely a man, one of ten thousand other victims, it is all a hopeless tangle.

And yet salvation is not through a dogma, but a person. Jesus did not say believe in a creed. He said: "Come to me." One may come to Him, even though he may have intellectual difficulties about His deity. At first the early disciples saw in Jesus only His humanity. Then later as they came to know Him better, the veil lifted and they saw God. Let us receive Him for all that He is, and for all that He can do for us, and learn to know Him by living Him.

Thus He offers Himself to us at the holy table, and thus He offers Himself to us in all life. He approaches us along the needs that are nearest. He ties Himself to our human nature, not only that He may know us, but that we may know Him, and as we follow Him and serve Him and try to be like Him, the light breaks, and on the altar stairs our lips are saying: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!"

XVI

WHY CHRIST IS NOT FORGOTTEN

"The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins."

—MATTHEW 9:6.

THE world has grown so accustomed to one of its strangest events as to regard it as ordinary and commonplace. This event is the sacramental remembrance of Jesus of Nazareth. At best, Jesus was not widely known, and His career closed in apparently hopeless defeat. He wrote no book. He organized no institution. He founded no government. He created no church. He left behind Him none of those signs and monuments by which the fame of men is kept from decay. There is not even a portrait of Jesus to perpetuate His memory, and His few followers at the first mutterings of storm broke in dismay and fled to cover.

Yet none is so well or widely or lovingly or reverently remembered as Jesus of Nazareth. Nineteen hundred years have gone by, but the Man of Galilee is not forgotten. To-day His followers are more numerous and His glorious fame more secure than that of any figure that has ever lifted its face along the skyline of history.

THE HIGH HOUR OF WORSHIP

Jesus is not only not forgotten, but to remember Him has become to millions of people their most solemn act of worship. When we observe the communion, we are doing what Christ's followers have been doing ever since that fateful hour long centuries ago when in the upper chamber in Jerusalem on the night of the betrayal, on the eve of the crucifixion, Jesus passed the bread and the wine to His disciples, and said: "This do in remembrance of me."

There has been no break in this remembrance. The clock of time has struck no hour since then that has found earth empty of the thought of Christ. The memory of Jesus has been the real apostolic succession. Down the steps of time the saints have come, bearing aloft the Holy Grail, and chanting faith's recessional: "Lest we forget."

In every land where Christianity has gone, the sacrament has been kept; no matter what have been the customs or traditions of the people, no matter who their sages or heroes have been, the one name they have raised to hallowed heights and the one face they have loved best have been the name and face of Jesus.

He has been remembered by all classes and stations and conditions of men. The high and the low have broken bread from the same loaf, and the rich and the poor have touched adoring lips to the same chalice. They have bowed at one altar in sweet

friendship of the name they loved, and they have forgotten there their differences.

Sometimes in the face of the hardest and hottest opposition the sacrament has been observed. There are times when it meant the hazard of one's life to observe the Holy Supper. Hunted by persecution, driven out into the night, fleeing to the moors and caves, Christ's followers have kept the feast. They have said: "We will risk all. We will lose all, even life itself, but we will remember Him; and we will remember Him as He has asked us, when He said, 'This do.'" They have felt that this remembrance of their Lord was faith's holiest hour and the soul's most solemn act of worship.

WHAT IS THE EXPLANATION?

Why is Christ so well and widely and lovingly remembered? It can hardly be simply because He asked it. He did ask it, but other leaders have made requests of their followers, and they have been forgotten. There are other things which Christ asked of His followers, which His followers have left undone.

It is not because of His origin. Christ's birth was wonderful as we now conceive it, but it did not seem so marvellous to them. Even if it had, the story of His birth could hardly keep the world spellbound for ages.

It is not for His miracles that He is remembered. If that were all, Christ would have no further men-

tion than some startling headline. Wonders are over in seven days. The world refuses to be permanently amazed. Marvels soon lose their edge.

It is not because of His teachings that Jesus' memory is kept fresh. He was the world's greatest teacher, but people do not worship teachers. They admire and study them. There is something in Christ greater than anything He ever taught.

It is not even His sufferings. There was His holiest hour. It is the suffering face of the marred Christ which appears in the sacrament,—not teacher, not wonder-worker, not saint, not peasant, but the thorn-crowned, sorrow-scarred face of the great sufferer. Yet even this is not enough to make His memory immortal. Others have suffered and been forgotten.

It is not even His holy life. His life was unequalled, but if that were all, Christ would be little more than a sacred relic. Men canonize their saints, and regard their duty as fully done. We must look beyond all these for the explanation.

A SAVIOUR

Christ is not forgotten because He has power on earth to forgive sins. He alone has this power. He is able to put a broken-down soul on its feet again, to build up into decency and respectability and happiness the character that has fallen into decay. He is able to open the blind eyes of a sightless soul, to unstop the ears of the deaf, to

tear away the veil of doubt which shrouds the minds that grope in darkness, to renew the paralyzed will, to emancipate the bondaged heart, to shake off the chains of evil habit, and sunder the death bands, and summon from the tomb of despair the soul dead in trespasses and in sin.

Christ is able to do this,—not merely to promise it. Any religion can promise it. Christ makes good not in some distant world, not in some uncanny realm. Any religion can promise to save you after death. But Christ promises to save us on earth, and He keeps His promise.

This is where Jesus comes to the throne. Speculate as you will about the miracles of His Person, the virgin birth, the dual nature, the resurrection, explain as you may the miracles of His ministry, healing the sick, feeding the multitude, casting out devils, raising the dead, philosophize as you may about His teachings and seem to find the germ of all Christ taught in some older text-book, criticize His followers, allow doubt to have its say and way, but at last you strike against a dead wall. There is one fact which declines to yield. It is the fact that “the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.”

The thing which Christ is doing is the thing which only a God can do. Men can teach; they can do wonders; but as the Pharisees themselves said: “Only God can forgive sin.”

It is what every member of the race must have

done for him if he is not to go lame and despairing out into the great beyond; for we "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." We may make light of sin. We may hypnotize ourselves into the belief that our sins are merely indiscretions, and that we are not so much sinners as the victims of circumstance; but soon or late that stern hour will come forcing us to our knees and sending to our lips the old prayer: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me!"

Suppose there were none to answer that cry, and no hope for the sin-sick soul, and no cure for the open sore of the world. Suppose there were no gospel for a life in trouble, for a character in decay, for a will in chains, for an unshriven soul on the brink of dissolution, nothing for such desperate need but mere maxims and mottoes and pratings about justice and a square deal! The future would be a horror of despair, and there would be no answer to the supreme cry of the soul but for Christ. He is the only Saviour. The world's everlasting necessity is a remedy for sin. We can do without bread, air, sunshine, far better than without salvation.

Christ alone can cure sin. He can cure it,—not discuss it, not describe it, not reveal it, not rebuke and condemn and threaten it, but Christ can cure sin! This is why He is not forgotten, and why, as long as the heart can remember, Jesus will be

loved. The Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. Christianity is the only religion with a gospel, the only religion that can cleanse the guilty stains from the soul. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Hallelujah! "This do in remembrance of me."

"When to the cross I turn mine eyes,
And rest on Calvary,
Oh, Lamb of God, my sacrifice,
I must remember Thee."

XVII

JESUS ONLY

"They saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves."—MARK 9:8.

THEY saw no man any more save Jesus only with themselves." It sounds like a note of disappointment. The disciples seem dejected. They have had a rapturous experience, but it has ended tamely. After standing on the mountain top of privilege and gazing into the glory of the open heaven and listening to celestial voices, they must go down and back to the world as poor as they came.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

The transfiguration has just taken place. Peter and James and John have been carried by Christ to the top of a high mountain. There before their eyes He was transfigured. His raiment shone with an unearthly lustre. Moses and Elias appeared and talked with Jesus. The disciples were thrilled. They were in an ecstasy. Peter said: "Let us build and stay." A voice out of the clouds said: "This is my beloved Son. Hear him."

And now it has all gone. The glory has passed away. There is no more any light. Moses and Elias have vanished. The voice has died down into dumb silence. The heavens look like any common day. They rub their eyes and look around and see no man any more save Jesus only with themselves. The glory of the great occasion is dead. It is useless to linger longer on that barren peak. There is nothing now to make Peter say: "Let us build." Divinity has perished from the landscape. They may as well descend.

No, divinity has not perished. Jesus is there. True, His garments have no supernatural lustre now. It is the dull cloak with which they are so familiar. There is no vision from the spirit world. It is Jesus only. Yet the disciples take down all the glory seen on the summit, for Jesus had created it. He had released His power. He had lifted the curtain and let them see. He had given them one seraphic glimpse into the glory. But Jesus was always in possession of the beauty and power there revealed. The inhabitants of the celestial world were always that close to Him. The transfiguration was potential within Him.

There is no reason for dejection. Jesus only was all they had seen, and vastly more, and they have Him. They have Jesus only with themselves. He will not leave them. The picture passes, but the substance tarries. Christ is theirs forever. He will never leave them. With Him

they can afford to go back to duty, to work, to trial, back to the sick, weary world, to suffering, to persecution and martyrdom. They saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves. But they can do all things through Him. All life is transfigured.

OUR TRANSFIGURED MOMENTS

Ever and again it is given to His followers to look upon some transfiguration of the Christ, to come to some hour that exalts Him, to behold some display that glorifies Him, to share in some experience out of which flashes the splendour of His divinity. It may be some precious personal experience, some wonderful conversion, some wide sweeping revival, some outward display of the progress of the kingdom, some spectacular revelation of the glory of the Church, some demonstration of the power of Christian civilization, some prophetic foretoken of the new age.

As we look and listen, we glorify the hour and exalt the scene. We say: "It is good to be here." We recite the splendours of the Church, the power of its message, the sweep of its influence, the wisdom of its creeds. We proclaim the kingdom. We talk about a new age of fraternalism. We discuss the brotherhood of man, and sing of an era of peace, and say: "It is great, it is good, it is glorious to be alive. Let us build."

Amid it all, we sometimes forget that quiet fig-

ure on the far horizon, the One Who came lonely and portionless to His own, and His own received Him not, the Son of Man Who had not where to lay His head. He hung on the cross and was wounded for our transgression. Amid all the splendours and triumphs of the day, amid the power and wealth, the pomp and progress of the Church, we sometimes forget Jesus. We are so fascinated by the frame we fail to see the picture. We are so absorbed with His garments that we fail to look into His face. We are so fascinated by the light that we forget the sun and imagine that the glory of the Gospel is in its manifestation, its displays and achievements.

But back of all is Jesus only. He has brought it to pass. It is but a glimpse of what is potential in the lowly, suffering Saviour. Take all away and leave us Jesus and nothing is lost. Tear down the Church, wipe out civilization, reverse every step of progress for the last nineteen hundred years, but leave Christ, and the world will begin afresh its climb out of sin. All will be restored, for there was a time when Christ was all. There were no mighty denominations, no widespread evangelizing forces, no Christian schools and printing presses and hospitals, no Christian nations conquering in the sign of the cross, no treasures of art and literature stamped with the influence of Christianity, but just the lowly, lonely Christ hanging ~~there~~ on the cross, thorn-crowned, spear-torn, nail-

driven, between two thieves, while the world went by wagging its head and saying: "He saved others; himself he cannot save." There was just Jesus only. But He is the divinity at the heart of it all. He produced it. It was potential within Him. He was the one man in human history who was His message.

Let us not forget Jesus in our admiration of what His teachings and influence have done in the world. Let us not lose His faith in our wonder of His work. Let us not think more of the transfiguration than we do of Christ Himself. We must not count His robe dearer than His Person, nor value relics higher than His Presence, nor exalt systems and sects and creeds and rituals or even the Church itself, above the living Christ.

Christ is Christianity. Take Him away, and there is nothing left. The Church collapses. The cult dies, and civilization withers. We succeed only as our work reveals, honours, exalts and glorifies Him. The great thing about a sermon is the revelation of Christ it may contain. It may be eloquent or plain, but if Christ is there, it will cast a spell. It is not the place, but the Christ in the place, that makes it holy. It may be a stately temple or a plain chapel or a spot in the open by the riverside, but if Christ is there, heaven brushes earth. Christ is Christianity. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." No wonder the sole memorial of our faith is the remembrance of Jesus.

THE VISION OF THE SACRAMENT

The vision of the sacrament is Jesus only. That night long ago as He gathered around the table with His disciples, He instituted the simple feast and said: "Do this in remembrance of me." He seemed to say: "Whenever you keep the supper, I want you to think of me. I want your devotion to be not the Church, not the system, not the ritual nor the cause, not the progress and triumph of the faith. As you gather in the holy hush of the communion hour, my prayer is that you may see no man save Jesus only with yourselves." This is what these symbols are saying. It is a plain feast, just a table and some plates and cups, some pieces of bread and a chalice of wine. The appointments are bare. They are not impressive, for they must not attract attention to themselves. We must see no man save Jesus only. We must go back to that figure on the cross. We must think of His love and feel His holy presence, then heaven is here.

"Jesus only with themselves." With you, with me! Surely there can never be a dull day if that be our lot. Jesus is enough. He saves, inspires, directs, sustains, enriches, shares, and when work is over, He rewards. After toil is finished it is enough if at the end of the journey in the haze of the twilight we shall see Jesus only, and hear Him say: "Well done, welcome home!"

As we gather around the table, may this come to pass. May the pomp and circumstance of religion retire into the shadows, and may the face and form of the sinners' Friend discover themselves to our faith. May we see no man save Jesus only with ourselves!

XVIII

“OF ME”

“*This do in remembrance of me.*”—LUKE 22: 19.

WHY did Christ add the last two words—
“of me”? Why not say: “This do in
remembrance,” and let it stand at that?

It would have been a sweet and privileged meditation just to remember, just to sit and muse while memory brought the old days back, just to think of the times that were gone, of the days when they were fishermen, of that hour when He called them and they left all and followed Him, of those three wonderful years of fellowship, of their first missionary journey and of the way they came back to Him flushed with success and radiant with the knowledge of the new power that had come. Did ever men have such eventful years? It would have been great just to remember.

This is what some of us do at communion. We remember. We recall the days that are gone. We think of the old associations in the church we love. We seem to see about us the people who used to sit in the pews and the minister who once stood in the pulpit. We remember ourselves, our falls, our

struggles, our blunders. We recall the periods of great spiritual awakening which star the path. It is heavenly thus to sit under the spell of sacred memory.

But this is not what Christ says. He says: “This do in remembrance of me.” He claims our attention. He seems to say: “I want you to be absorbed with me, not with thoughts of yourselves, of your church, of your preacher and his sermon, but of me.” He does not say that He wants us to remember something about Him, to recall His words, His work, His sufferings. Of course there is a sense in which all these crowd in as we think of Him. But He is more than any sermon He ever preached or any miracle He ever wrought, and He says: “Remember me.” The personality of Christ is the picture on which faith is to dwell in the sacrament.

THE EGOTISM OF JESUS

Jesus was the greatest egotist the world has ever known. One needs but to recall some of His teachings to be convinced of this. He said: “Whosoever believeth in me shall be saved.” He brushes aside all others as pretenders, and claims that He, and He alone, is Saviour.

He says: “I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” He sends all systems and creeds and organizations and cults to the rear, and fills their places with Him-

self. He claims that He, and He alone, has the power to introduce men to God. He is the only way, and he that climbeth up some other way is a thief and a robber.

Hear Him as He takes the world into His heart, and says: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Recite the travail of the world. Think of its pain and agony, of its remorse and bitter disappointment, of all its sorrow and tears. How can such sickness ever be healed? For Christ it is easy. He says: "Just come to me, and your tired hearts will be cured."

He assumes the power to forgive sin. He says: "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sin." He is claiming sinless perfection, for if He forgives sin, He does not commit it. He asks: "Lovest thou me?" and makes devotion to Himself the supreme motive in Christian service.

Christianity is the religion of a Person,—not of a ritual or a cult or a system, but of a Person. People are religious not as they are orthodox, not as they recite a liturgy, not as they discharge certain duties and subscribe to certain views, but as they are related to Jesus.

Then Christ is more than a mere man. It would be blasphemy for a mere man to say what Christ says. It would be worse than a farce for the best of men to claim what Christ claims. It would be more than ridiculous for them to profess to do what Christ does. But He performs what He

proposes. His promises are worth their face value. Christ makes good.

His is the egotism of a God. It does not offend us. It would be strange if, being what He is, He should say less. Jesus assumed His godhood. He did not claim it, because such claim was unnecessary. In so far as saving Himself went, He emptied Himself of His godhood, because He came to live a real human life, to meet trial as we must meet it, and to be tempted in all points like as we are. But let us not misunderstand Him. This does not mean that Christ takes a second place.

THE GOAL OF RELIGION

Jesus is the goal of religion. He comes first. He is the chiefest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely. Perhaps you are trying to be religious. What do you mean by it? What thought is in your mind and what plan are you following to accomplish your desire? You attend church, but why? You contribute your money to good causes, but why? To whom are you making your gifts? To the church? To humanity? Perhaps you teach a class in the Sunday-school, or help at the mission, or are a worker at the settlement. For whom are you doing all this? Analyze your religion. Perhaps much of it never gets to Christ at all.

Many of the things we do we do simply because we like to do them. The service is congenial.

Perhaps it makes us feel important. It classifies us with people who are decent and generous and respectable. We are fond of the church. We want it to make a good record. We would like to meet the expectations which the world has of us. Society might call us mean were we to decline. And all of this is very nice, in a way, but it is not being a Christian. A pagan can go this far.

Christ says: "I want you to do it for me. When you help a lame man, I want you to be thinking not so much of him, but of me. When you are engaged in Christian service, I would have your mind filled with thoughts not so much of the church or of the class as of me. When you give your money, back of the gift I would have you remember not merely the community or the heathen, or even my servant the missionary, but I want you to remember me, your Saviour."

Does Christ stand out before us? Is He supreme? Have we thought that what we were doing, we were doing for Him, and that when we failed to do, it was not the people we hurt, nor the church, but were driving the nails into the hands of Christ? Have you ever heard Him cry out as you pressed down the thorns? No. His pale lips speak no word. But if we could see the unseen, we might see what Peter saw that night at the trial when, as he denied Him, he turned and saw Jesus. We might hear what John heard as

He listened to his Master that awful night before Pilate.

Let us readjust our motives here at the communion table. What is the place we give Christ? In our great campaigns for the kingdom, what motive drives us on? Is it church pride, or denominational loyalty, or the honour that attaches to success, or is it all for Him?

“This do in remembrance of me.” That will sustain us. It will make the difficult easy. It will keep us sweet when we are tempted to be bitter. It will enable us to see the best in others, and it will enable us to rejoice in suffering. I have heard of a young man who came to America from a nation to whom we send the missionaries. He had heard of Jesus, and had learned to love Him. He wanted to fit himself for Christian service to his own nation. Without means, he was working his passage in the stifling hold of the ship as a stoker, but he said the thing that sustained him was, in the midst of the awful heat and dirt of that long passage, that it was for Christ.

It is our devotion to Jesus that will shape the verdict at last. “I was in prison and ye came unto me.” Maybe we were not always conscious that He was there, but it was not for the prisoner, it was for the Christ that we went. It was in His name that we gave a cup of water to a thirsty disciple. It was because we knew and loved Jesus that we gave a lift to the hurt man on the highway,

and the Judge is saying: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me."

"This do in remembrance of me." May we see Him as we gather around the table. In the holy hush of communion, for us may it be Jesus, only Jesus. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

XIX

THE PROGRAM OF THE UPPER ROOM

"Ye are witnesses of these things."—LUKE 24:48.

THE place was the upper chamber at Jerusalem. It was the first cathedral of the Christian Church. There was no altar, no choir, no nave, no crucifix. It was without Gothic arches and steepled splendour. There were just the four bare walls of a common room, but there never was built a house that held more of God than that plain room. It was the room where the Holy Supper was instituted, where Christ's disciples made their home after they had lost their Master. It was the room in which the prayer-meeting was held which preceded Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended in power and the gift of tongues was bestowed. There more than once the risen Christ showed Himself to His friends. Such is the place.

The people in this room consist of Jesus and ten men, Thomas the doubter being absent. They are the friends who had followed Christ through the three strange and eventful years of His earthly ministry, but times have changed. They have seen

Him arrested and crucified. They have watched Him stagger down the road under the load of a cross. They have seen the soldiers nail Him to the tree, and have heard His cries from the cross. They have watched Him die, and they have laid His body in the tomb. Yet here He is with them again. He is risen. They cannot doubt it. He shows them the print of the nails. He eats with them. Their Master has come back. And those men are all a-tremble with the ecstasy of the hour.

The two disciples who saw Him in the breaking of the bread at Emmaus have told their strange story, and even while they tell it, Jesus is there in the room with them again, with the old look in His face, and the voice they love so well has once more spoken peace. That has thrilled them. What care they now for the great hostile world whose tides of unbelief and persecution break and beat outside? The door is shut, and within is Christ. What care they for the soldiers and the priests and the excited mob? The world may cry: "Crucify him!" They may nail Him to the cross and seal His sepulchre and station a guard, but they cannot keep Christ in the tomb. What do these friends of Christ care now for the world?

Ah, but they must care. This is their mission. They must care for the cold, hostile, persecuting world. Next to their Lord, there is nothing they must care for quite so much. They must not care for themselves. They must not care for ease or

peace or joy, nor count life dear. They must hold all cheap, that they may bless the world God loved and Christ came to save.

And so the mystical must become practical. The ecstasy must translate itself into service. Privilege must pack itself into power. This is the law of the kingdom. It was so with the demoniac rescued from the tomb. It was the purpose of that wonderful experience on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was the message to M^{ary} in the garden that Easter morn. And it is the message here in the upper room. The needy world waits outside the door and they must plan to save the lost. There are rooms in which the destiny of nations is decided, and the map of earth changed. There in the upper room it was the destiny of a race that was involved.

How is the world to be saved? What shall be the program? How shall the campaign be planned? Christ is going away, but His work must go on. There in that room is to be formulated the scheme which is to issue in world redemption. From the upper room is to go forth the power which is to change the world. Through that door directly will pass a force incarnated in the personalities of eleven men that will shake down every despotism, terminate every tyranny, overthrow the barriers of hate, wipe out every line of caste, cure every wound, comfort every sorrow, and atone for every sin.

It is a stupendous undertaking. The world is to crown Christ King. The cross must triumph. The Sermon on the Mount must be translated into practice. It means the mightiest upheaval in human history. The forces of evil are to be routed, and civilization is to be built on the Golden Rule. This is the task. Already it has partially been accomplished. All the program of world evangelization is potential in that upper room where ten men tarry under the spell of a resurrected Christ.

Christ announced the program. He sums it up in a single line. "Ye are witnesses of these things." That was all. They were to file out of that room into the world and become witnesses. Nothing could be more practical. They were to translate the mystical. They were to harness the ecstasy. They were to live out the peace. And they did. In the gray dawn of the day of service they opened the door of the upper room and allowed the tides of the hostile world to break over them. They faced the battle line and gave their testimony. They laid down their lives. But it was victory.

WITNESSES

The program of the upper room is for Christ's disciples to be witnesses. It is for those who have sat at Jesus' feet and have learned of Him to tell what they have learned. It is for those who have heard it to publish the good news. It is for those

who have become partakers of the Gospel to proclaim the message. That is all. Could anything be simpler? Men were to be saved by believing. But how can they believe on Him of Whom they have not heard?

The program of the upper room was not for the disciples to raise an army and unsheath the sword and appeal to force. No world power is mentioned. There is not a word about money or scholarship or influence or place. They had none of this. They were just to be witnesses.

The program was not that they should go forth to answer the arguments of their foes or to reply to the criticism of those who doubted or despised their call. They were not asked to explain away the difficulties nor to soften the hardships involved in discipleship. They were to be neither judge nor jury nor advocate, but just witnesses.

They were not asked to organize themselves into an institution in order to do the work. They were not even told to found a church. Of course, the church would come. But it would come as a by-product of witnessing. Nothing is said about a hierarchy or a priesthood. Many things have been added to the program since that hour in the upper room, some of which are useful, but in the original there was nothing but witnessing.

It seemed too simple. It sounded inadequate. It looked as though the plan were doomed to failure. What did the world care for witnesses? It

would despise them and impeach them and silence them. It would trample on their testimony. It would heap ridicule on their efforts. The world would not listen. But Christ does not revise. He says: "Ye are witnesses of these things." And He lets it stand at that. ✓ On this He stakes His cause. He went into battle with neither army nor ammunition nor equipment, with eleven men for His followers, who had nothing in the world but the story of their faith in their Leader.

This is still the program. Since that night long ago in the upper room, we have gotten much together. Earth is filled with great churches. The Church is rich and learned and influential. The foremost nations of the world call themselves Christian. Yet these are not the things that win. The program of victory is still the program of the upper room. The world is saved only as Christ's disciples become His witnesses. It is here the tide turns. This is all Christ asks of us, and nothing can take its place. "Ye are witnesses of these things."

The important thing is to be a witness. I may be a church member, but if I am not a witness, I am a failure. The big thing is not my denomination, my contribution, my activities, my knowledge of theology, my position in the church or in the world, but my testimony.) Has the world ever thought enough of my religious life to call me to the witness stand?

THE ASSETS OF A WITNESS

To be a witness one must have an experience. He must know what he knows. It is not enough for him to know what some one else knows. It will not answer for him to report what others say they have heard or seen or felt. He must himself have seen and heard and felt. He must know Jesus in the forgiveness of his sins. An unconverted man may hold office in the church. He may be a generous contributor of his means. He may found charities and philanthropies and support a missionary. He may teach in the Sunday-school. He may even be a preacher of the Gospel. He may do any number of good things. But he cannot get into the program of the upper room. To do that, he must have an experience. He must be converted himself and be able to say: "I know!"

His testimony must be specific. It is not enough for him to tell where he lives, to announce his nationality, his colour, his condition. It will not suffice for him to tell what he knows about agriculture or science or lawmaking. The mission of the Church is definite. The kingdom is not meat and drink. It is not an economic paradise that Jesus came to establish. The Church is not asked to give its testimony on every new ripple that shows on the sea of human life. It is to tell what it knows about Christ, of His saving power, of His ability to cure sin.

If our testimony is to be credible, our character must be in harmony with the truth we preach. It must certify that we are trustworthy. A witness must be faithful. This is preëminently true when it comes to religion. We must be what we proclaim. We must possess, and not merely profess. Christ's stamp must be on us. The world will not listen to a hypocrite or a pretender.

EVIDENCE

We are witnesses of "these things." What things? They are the things mentioned in the forty-sixth and forty-seventh verses of the chapter. They are three in number.

We are to testify to the sufferings of Christ. This is the first thing the world needs to know. It must learn that He suffered. It must stop at the cross. It must discover that He laid down His life for sinners. We are to go on the witness stand to prove that Calvary is a reality. How? Not by saying, but by being. We must live the cross. Paul declared that he filled up the sufferings of Christ, and that he bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Whatever happened to Christ must happen to His followers. We must take up our cross and follow Him. We must be crucified with Him. Talk is cheap. It convinces no one. But to live the cross,—that is unanswerable.

We must testify to the resurrection of Christ.

The world also needs to know that Christ rose from the dead. This is the seal and proof of all He taught. It was the great event. How are we to testify to the resurrection? We must do more than say that He rose. It is not enough to sing an Easter song or hold an Easter service. Christ must be risen in us. The soul must emerge from the tomb of sin and selfishness. We must experience the resurrection. That was the glorious thing about the woman who broke her alabaster box on Christ. She was risen. The world listens not so much to our song as to us. If Christ is risen in me the hope of glory, that is evidence.

We must testify to repentance and remission of sins in His name. This is the good news the world is waiting to hear from those men who are issuing from the upper room. They were not waiting to learn some new theory of science or the latest market quotations or the best method of handling the social evil, but how sin could be cured and an entrance made into the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. How were they to furnish such testimony? It was not enough to believe it for themselves. They must believe it and experience it, but they must also proclaim it. They must see that everybody hears it. They must go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. They must become heralds, ambassadors, living incarnations of the holy evangel.

THE CAMPAIGN

Such was the program of the upper room. As that little apostolic group passed out, this is what they went to do. After Pentecost, they began to preach,—not a system, not a dogma, but evidence. They testified to the thing they knew. As they did so, the barriers fell away and the cross was triumphant.

This is our business as Christians. The communion will remind us of this. In our imagination we return to the upper room, and there the old program greets us. We are witnesses of these things, in our own town, in our own home. In the office, the factory, on the street, on the golf links, in our social recreations, in our business relations, wherever we are, we are to be witnesses.

Christ has left His work with us. His cause stands or falls, wins or fails, with our testimony. The world judges the Saviour by us. It is not a case of the inspiration of the Bible or of the miracles, or of the Church. It is a case of the Christian, of whether he is a good or bad witness.

It is great to be faithful. Now we are in the upper room. To-morrow we shall be in the world, and the salvation of the world will depend on us. It is a tremendous responsibility. It is an impossible task that is assigned us. It throws us back on God. With Him the impossible becomes possible. Oh, to catch the spirit of those men in the upper room, and of Christ's true friends who in every age have turned the tide!

XX

INSIDE THE CUP

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."—MATTHEW 26: 28.

BY "inside the cup" I am not referring to the engaging book with this title which appeared a few years ago and created something of a sensation, nor to the picture which films the story of the book, although there is much in both to stir the conscience and make us stop and ask whether we are true representatives of the meek and lowly Jesus Who cared not for caste nor class, but Who loved humanity with such passion that He poured out His life on Calvary's cross.

By "inside the cup" I mean the contents of the communion cup which Christ held in His hand that fateful night in the upper room, as He blessed the cup and passed it to His disciples, saying: "Drink ye all of it." What did Christ mean? What was inside the cup?

There was some passover wine made of the grapes which had ripened on the hillside yonder in the summer sun. Whether it was fermented or unfermented wine we are not told. Controversies have raged around the question. Books have been written on the subject. It is not, however, a ques-

tion of relatively great importance. There are some so concerned for the wine in the cup that they would have none of the sacramental symbol left unused lest there should be the sacrilege of a holy thing. This, too, is also a matter not essential. Had it been, Christ would probably have charged His disciples to such caution at the institution of the Supper.

The Saviour's atonement was inside the cup. We are coming to something vastly important now. "For this is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins." He was speaking of His passion. The wine symbolizes the blood shed on the cross. The cup is the memorial of His sufferings and death. It is the cup of sacrifice, the chalice of forgiveness, the goblet of redemption. It is this that He holds out to those men at the table, as He passes the cup. Let us think of this as we commune. As we touch our lips to the cup, we are looking down on the Saviour Who died that we might be forgiven, Whose blood was shed for the remission of sins, in Whose blood the pilgrim hosts wash their robes and make them white; and so cleansing is the power of this blood that, "though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."

But this is not all that is inside the cup. Those for whom Christ died are there. How many are there, and of what classes? Who was Christ thinking about when He said His blood was shed for

many? Did He mean to include only the church people, the good, the worthy, the cultured and the respectable? He did not stop with these on other occasions. Why should He narrow Himself here? There are beggars inside the cup. The lepers are there, the lame, the halt, and the blind. Look at them. They are moving around inside the cup. They are lifting wan faces. They are holding up their hands. They are making prayers. For Jesus came to call not the righteous, but sinners, to repentance, and He said: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."

He says that His blood was shed for many. Why not for all? What a glorious thing if He had said all! I think He wanted to say it, but He knew that some would reject it. Perhaps He was thinking of Judas. He cannot say all, but He does say many. He means that all who come will be received. There is enough for all, and He is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God through Him. But some will decline to come. They will exclude themselves. It is strange that they should, but every day we see them doing this. Yet the "many" remains in the line. Widen out Christ's phrase. There is a multitude no man can number.

Inside the cup are some from all nations. Christ has a constituency from every nationality. His humanity is racial. He is the desire of nations. Only in Him is found what every nation desires to

realize. Oh, that they could see it! What America needs is Christ. What China and Japan need is Christ. What white man and black man and yellow man need is the Son of Man. "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness." This is why He said: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." He was thinking of all of them when He said it, of high and low, rich and poor, publican and sinner, troubled and erring. He was thinking of the criminal and the street-walker, rulers and slaves. All are there inside the cup. It is the world's melting-pot. There in the communion cup our common humanity mingles, because there our Friend meets us. He died for all, and calls us all His friends. He says: "All ye are brethren."

Can it be that we have withheld the cup from any whom Christ placed inside? If they are to find Him, they must first know Him. How shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher? Have we failed to make Him known? Have we kept out some whom Christ wants in, some for whom He died, some who have as much right there as we, some for whom He is waiting, waiting to give them remission of sins, but they have not received it because the knowledge has stopped in us?

Let us think of them as we come to communion. Let us think of Him and of our high privileges in Him. It is a blessed thing to sit at the table and

meditate on His wondrous love. But I wonder if, as He looks down upon us, He may not be thinking of some who are not His? He misses them. Some are not here because they never had a chance. They had no chance because some who knew failed to let them know that there is room, and that they are expected. It is strange that we should forget at the table where the one thing He asks is that we remember.

The communion was being observed in a great church. The emblems had been passed. Following a custom sometimes practiced, the minister was asking: "Have any been omitted?" And a woman who had communed said it seemed to her that as she heard the question, hundreds of women began to arise from the countries of the earth, from China, and Africa, and India, and Korea, and Japan, and as they stood up, they seemed to cry out: "Yes, we have been omitted. None has ever broken to us the bread of life."

"Sudden before my inward open vision
Millions of faces crowded up to view,
Sad eyes that said: 'For us is no provision,
Give us your Saviour, too.'

" 'Give us,' they cry, 'your cup of consolation,
Never to our outreaching hands 'tis passed;
We long for the Desire of every nation,
And oh, we die so fast! ' "

XXI

WHERE SUFFERING AND GLORY BLEND

"If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."—ROMANS 8: 17.

THIS verse takes us to the place where suffering and glory blend.

Suffering is a thing we shun. Everybody runs away from it. Who wants to suffer? We hide out for fear of meeting the dread thing on life's road. We build barriers and construct fortifications, but suffering laughs at us. It brushes aside all our defenses. It runs us down. It springs from ambush. It is deaf to our cries and blind to our piteous plight. We cannot escape suffering. Some it smites with physical pain, some with an anguished mind, some with discouragement and despair, some with the agony of a broken heart. Somewhere, sometime on every life suffering makes its mark.

Glory is the thing we seek. Everybody is running after it. Everybody wants glory of some kind. There are many kinds of glory,—the glory of place, of power, of culture, of character, of skill, of heroism, of sacrifice, of love, of unselfishness. There is the glory of the soldier, the states-

man, the philanthropist, the poet, the artist, the musician. Glory has many garbs, but whatever its garment, it is the thing everybody is after. But it is elusive. It hides out. It slips away and leaves us in the gloom.

Suffering and glory! The one thing all seek and the one thing all shun! We locate them far apart, but this line from Paul's letter to the Romans seems to say: "If you will listen to me, I will show you how suffering and glory meet. I will take you to the place where they blend and become one. If you will harken to my voice and receive what I offer, you will find suffering transfigured and glory acquired. "For if so be that we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him."

GLORY COSTS SUFFERING

We get a glimpse of this as we look about us in the world. It shows itself in nature. There was never a harvest but had to pay the price of pain and travail, never a dawn but had to drag itself out of the darkness of night, never a victory but had the muck of slaughter on its trail, never a deed of heroism but somebody had to suffer. Glory is not cheap. It is not a kind of ripe fruit which lazy hands may pluck from low-hanging branches of an idle day. Glory camps on the heights. It is a cliff dweller. It costs, and the kind of coin in which payment must be made is stamped with suffering.

There is a place where we get more than a glimpse of the fact that glory costs suffering,—where we get a demonstration. There is a place where this great truth is proclaimed. It is at the cross. “If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Calvary is the story of suffering. Jesus was the great sufferer. Never was there pain like His. He drank the bitter cup to its dregs. He dwelt in the gloom which hovers about the caverns of death. His heart was anguished with a loneliness which seemed to separate Him from God, but in all this He was paying the price for the glory of becoming the world’s Redeemer. He suffered in order that He might save. Had He never suffered, He could never save. This is the price He paid. At Calvary glory cost suffering.

SUFFERING PRODUCES GLORY

We get a suggestion, a glimpse of this, too, as we look out on the world about us. Nature also discloses it in the frost which pulverizes the soil for the new sowing, in the thunderbolt which sweetens and purifies the air, in the protesting nerves which ring the danger signals in our flesh against approaching peril, in those suffering moods of the soul by which human nature is enriched with a gentler and a wider sympathy. Suffering produces glory. You can see it in the refiner’s pot where dross is consumed and gold is refined. You

can see it on the potter's wheel where dull clay is shaped into use and beauty. You can see it under the hand of the lapidarian as the light sparkles and flashes from the face of a gem, and you can see it in the great loom of time which weaves a fabric we call life. Suffering produces glory. Glory is the finished product of suffering.

But there is a place where we get more than a glimpse, where we get a demonstraton. There is a place where it is proclaimed. It is at the cross, the cross of Calvary. The cross is the story of Christ's victory. It tells us not merely that He suffered. It was where He accomplished His dream. As He hung there in the darkness, He saw the light. He saw past the gaunt outlines of the accursed tree, beyond His persecuters, beyond the nails and thorns and loneliness. He saw beyond the veil into the glory. He saw the crown of conquest and the throne of dominion and the faces of friends, and He heard the triumph song. "He saw of the travail of his soul and was satisfied." And so this again is where suffering and glory blend,—there where a Man laid down His life for a cause, and where along a road that was steep and rough He climbed to the sun-kissed peaks, and where on a cross that was lonely He hung until the night was gone, and where in a tomb that was sealed and guarded He nursed His hope till Easter morning rolled the stone away and the angels said: "He is risen."

THE MESSAGE OF THE SACRAMENT

The holy sacrament speaks to us of suffering,—not merely of our sufferings, but of the Saviour's suffering. It tells us of One Who bore on His great heart all the sufferings of the world, Who carried on His shoulder all the burdens of mankind, and Who as He took His lot tasted death for every man.

It also speaks to us of glory,—not of a glory that is counterfeit, not of the glory of place and pomp and power, not of the gleam of mortal triumph, but of eternal glory, of the glory which Christ had with the Father before the world was. It speaks to us of a spiritual glory that can never be dulled nor dimmed nor diminished.

And then the communion tells us where these two things blend. It tells us that glory costs suffering and that suffering produces glory, and it declares that for those who are with Him the chasm between glory and suffering disappears. There is no promise or hope just to naked suffering. It is to those who suffer with Him. Our sufferings must be with Christ. We must be His comrades, His companions. It is when we are in fellowship with Him that suffering is transfigured, and such fellowship is within our reach, for Jesus says: "Let us suffer together that we may be also glorified together." This is what He means when He says: "Take my yoke upon you." He would lead

us out where the thing we shun becomes the thing we seek, and where our fears are changed to hope.

Let us not be afraid of suffering, for if we suffer with Him we shall also be glorified together. When pain and anguish and sorrow break on us, let us think of Him Who stands beside us in the shadows and suffers, too. Let us remember that it pleased God to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering, and know that suffering can have no other mission for those in fellowship with Christ. It is to make us perfect. When we suffer, it is that our ministry may be larger, sweeter, holier. "I have called thee to suffer," was Christ's message to Paul. It was not a call to a dwarfed and diminishing, but to an enlarged and ever-increasing service. Thus let us wait for the morning. For the morning cometh. Let us wait for the cloud of suffering to change to gold. You have seen clouds do that yonder across the western hills at sunset. You have watched the sullen sky sheathed in gray and gloom change and flame into golden glory. It is a picture of what comes to those who suffer with Him. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." "For these light afflictions which are but for a moment shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." And so for all who tarry at the cross and sit at the table, for all who drink of His cup and are baptized with His baptism, suffering and glory blend.

XXII

FROM THE COMMUNION TABLE TO PERJURY

"If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise said they all."—MARK 14: 31.

THIS is a great oath of fealty to Christ. It is a mighty vow of allegiance, a sublime declaration of unfaltering faith and steadfast devotion.

Jesus seems despondent. He is on the verge of Calvary. He is entering upon a night of agony. He is passing through the gate into Gethsemane. Speaking to His disciples about the loneliness that will soon be upon Him, He tells them that they will leave Him. They will smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. There is a tinge of melancholy dejection to His words as He predicts the desertion of His disciples.

It was then that Simon Peter took a great oath, and swore undying attachment to Christ. "If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise." Peter was never greater than then. He was on the summit of heroic love. If only he could live there always and be as true, as steadfast, and as outspoken in his loyalty, what a power he would be!

He meant it. Do not for a moment think he was

pretending. What he said is more than mere words. Peter had his faults, but hypocrisy was not one of them. He meant all that he said. His heart was fixed, and he was ready then and there to die for Christ.

Nevertheless, he broke his oath, and perjured himself. It was done under the most humiliating circumstances. Looked at in the later happenings of that awful night, what he said was worse than a boast. It became the broken vow of a perjurer, and stands midway between the hour of holiest privilege and shameful denial.

THE STORY

Christ had just instituted the Holy Supper. There in the upper room He was gathered with His disciples on the fateful night. It was the last hour of placid, unbroken fellowship before the storm. In His wonderful discourse He had unveiled to them His heart. He had offered the intercessory prayer. How near they seemed to each other then, and how close to God! Then came the bread and the cup of remembrance, and then the hymn, and now they are on their way to the Mount of Olives.

It was the first communion in the history of the Church, the first celebration of the feast that was to be kept over and over again. These men have shared it, have looked upon the very face of Christ, have heard His voice in the sacrament, have seen

Him touch and bless the emblems. Surely they can never pass from a scene so holy but to a service sacred and divine. No wonder they swear allegiance and say they are ready to die for Him!

Yet in a few hours all is changed. Christ has been arrested and His disciples, forsaking Him, have fled. The men who swore they would die with Him break their oath and run for their lives. Yonder in the council chamber of the high priest Christ is on trial, the very Christ Who at the communion table a while ago said: "This do in remembrance of me." Among those who steal into the servants' hall on one side of the court is Peter. His cloak is drawn close about him. He is turbaned so as to be scarcely recognizable. The night air is chilly and he draws near the fire to warm himself.

Meanwhile the most unjust trial that ever disgraced the annals of a court goes on. Jesus is arraigned. The Saviour is now among His enemies. They charge Him with blasphemy. They take council to kill Him. They spit in His face and smite Him with the palms of their hands and heap coarse ridicule on the gentle Christ. How does the disciple take all this? How does the man who said: "If I should die with thee I will not deny thee in any wise," handle himself now? He warms himself. He is making himself comfortable. Directly a maid says: "And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth!" But he denied, saying: "I

know not, neither understand I what thou sayest." This is the man who five hours before had sat at the communion table and said: "I will remember."

And directly a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by: "This is one of them," and again he denied. This is the man who three hours before had declared he would die sooner than deny. He has perjured himself. Then one who stood by said: "Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto." But he began to curse and to swear, saying: "I know not this man of whom ye speak." And yet his lips are hardly dry from the communion wine, and the breath of his vow is still on his face. In six short hours Simon Peter has plunged from the heights to the depths.

How could he do such a thing? He has followed Christ for three years and seen Him work miracles. He has walked on the sea to meet Him and been present at the transfiguration. He has declared: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" How under any circumstances could he get his consent to deny his Master? How could he do it under the circumstances of the trial and with the suffering, deserted Saviour just yonder through the door? It was time for him to rush in, and stand by and die, but instead, with oaths and curses he denies his Master.

And the Bible records this story of shame. We do not get it from Christ's enemies, but from His

friends. The Bible has nothing to conceal. If it were a human book such an incident would be left out or glossed over. But the Book is divine. It tells all. It records the oath, and then relates how the chief apostle passed from that great vow to perjury.

What does all this prove? Not that Christianity is false, nor Christ an impostor, nor His teachings without value, nor the hour in the upper room meaningless. It does not brand Christian faith as a spurious thing, and brand Christ's followers as hypocrites. It only proves that men may fail, that the best of men may fall into the worst of sins, that human nature is weak, that temptation is ceaseless, and that men of the highest gifts and the richest experience sometimes descend from heights of faith to depths of apostasy.

APPLICATION

Privilege does not prevent sin. The fact that one enjoys rare spiritual blessings does not insure against the possibility of a fall. One may be blessed with all the means of grace. He may come from a Christian home where the Bible and the prayer life obtain. He may be a member of the church and receive the sacrament. He may be regenerated and have a precious spiritual experience and enjoy periods of great spiritual exhilaration, and yet go down in some great moral or spiritual collapse.

The fact that one is a Christian, that he has experienced regeneration and become a child of God and an heir to glory, does not guarantee him against the possibility of falling into sin. Sometimes we seem to think it does, and imagine that when one has become a Christian the fight is over. But not so. Often the real fight has just begun. Temptation is all the more insidious and troublesome after one has taken his stand and begun to fight the good fight of faith.

The Scriptures again and again record instances of the fall of God's servants. David was a man after God's own heart, but he fell. There is not a perfect man in the Old Testament. Peter was not alone. All the disciples fled. It is the same to-day. Good men go wrong. Sometimes ministers of the Gospel are guilty of the infamy which wrecks a home. They administer the holy sacrament and then go on to deeds in which they deny their Lord.

It is a holy privilege to come to communion, to gather with Christ's friends around the table and partake of the sacramental emblems, to remember Jesus and plight to Him afresh our troth, to say in act if not in words: "If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise." Let us not, however, conclude that there is no peril of a fall for us. It is possible to pass from the table to drunkenness, to adultery, to dishonesty. The lips which touch the emblems of communion may profane

God's name and deny the Saviour. 'The man who sat at the table may directly be sitting with Christ's enemies. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Privilege does not prevent sin.

There is no wall against temptation, no barrier that can keep it out, no armour that makes us immune. It found Christ. Jesus was tempted, and His temptation came shortly after His baptism, soon after the voice from heaven certifying His Sonship with God. No monk's cell, no pious cloister, no holy retreat, no sacred calling, can make us exempt.

Sometimes the peril of temptation seems greatest along the border-line of our holiest experiences. Satan comes to us in the wake of spiritual victory and achievement. He takes us unawares. He steals in unobserved while we are off guard, in some moment of great religious joy. But do not conclude that it is impossible to resist him. We do not need to yield to temptation. It is the devil's lie to believe that because we are tempted we must fall, or that the presence of temptation is an excuse for surrender. Christ refused to yield. Temptation must be resisted. When we resist the devil he flees from us. We cannot escape temptation. It came to the angels, and it comes to men even in holiest moments and places, but it can be fought off and vanquished.

Our fall does not discredit Christ. It is bad on any cause when its adherents turn out badly. Peo-

ple are disposed to blame a cause for the shortcomings of its advocates. Christ's cause does not escape. When Christians behave badly and drag their robes in the dirt and degrade the high calling, the world is disposed to say: "Christ is an impostor. The Gospel is a superstition. The Bible is false."

This does not follow. Because Peter passed from the upper room to perjury does not prove that Jesus was false or His teachings untrustworthy or His work on the cross without value. It merely proves that Peter was a weak man. He denied Christ not because of what Christ was, but in spite of it. The fall of a Christian does not prove that the privileges of religion are worthless. Because Christ's disciples sometimes pass from the communion table to perjury, we are not to conclude that the communion is an empty form. Because some ministers are guilty of domestic infidelity, it is not fair to brand all preachers as false. Let our critics be fair. The lapse is not because of, but in spite of, the teachings of Christ.

Neither is it fair to conclude that the disciple who falls is spurious. Peter's fall was tragic, but it did not wreck his religious life nor destroy his soul. He was a redeemed man before he fell, during his denial, and after his spiritual collapse. God's work is permanent. The same truth is brought out in the experience of David and Thomas and others in the Bible. When one be-

comes a Christian, he is born again. His regeneration does not guarantee that he shall never sin, but it does guarantee that he will never be lost. Christ said: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." When we fall, the devil would have us believe that all is over, that hope is dead. But this is the one thing we must never believe.

The proof is in repentance. Peter wept. Judas had no repentance. If one who falls is really God's child, the mood of repentance will come. The fall is temporary. Peter's great day was ahead of him. The man who denied Christ in the servants' hall fifty days later preaches a sermon and thousands are converted. He becomes the foremost apostle of the early church. Who knows but some new power came to him through the awful experience on the dark night of his denial?

The fall, however, does prove our need of constant reliance upon God for strength. Temptation comes, but there is a way to meet it. God has not promised to keep us from temptation, but to deliver us in the midst of it, and not to suffer us to be tempted beyond that we are able to bear. Christ can give the tempted soul victory. He has promised never to leave us. If only we will live close to Him, we shall pass not from the communion table to perjury, but to unbroken fellowship and triumphant service.

XXIII

CAN THE WORLD REPRODUCE CALVARY?

"We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

—I JOHN 3: 16.

THIS is a bold thing for a man to say. Does he realize what his words mean? Is he beating the air or is he ready for business? We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. This means that the people who represent Christ on earth must meet Him at Calvary. They must meet Him there not to sing hymns and recite liturgies, not to hide behind the skirts of a tragedy that is to make them immune from penalty, not for the purpose of exploiting a creed or subscribing to dogmas which constitute their hallmark of orthodoxy. They are to meet Him there at Calvary to die with Him, to match His passion with sacrifice, to become comrades of the cross and lay down their lives for the brethren.

Thus the world is to be saved. Jesus did not die just to make us happy. It is a cheap diagnosis that finds nothing more heroic in Calvary than exemption. Those who think of the Gospel as a scheme to play "safety first," as a project to rebuild the lost Eden, as a post mortem passport to Paradise,

have not walked the thorn-path with the Son of God. Christ died for us that we might die for others, because the only road to life for anything winds past a grave, because the only hope for this or any world is in people who love enough to make the supreme sacrifice.

The communion would keep this in everlasting remembrance. Christ's death is saying that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. It is a bold thing to say that we will. Is it too bold? Is it so daring that none can be found to meet it? Is it vain to hope that in the earth to-day may be found some with hearts prepared and souls afire to step out of the ranks and say: "We are ready"? Peter said: "I will die for Him." True, he failed, but he had one glorious moment when his soul was big enough to say it and to mean it. Some who are ready to say as much and make good the vow must be found to-day, else civilization is doomed and the world lost.

THE WORLD OUTLOOK

These are days when it is easy to be a pessimist. The world is full of strife and unrest. Forces have been released which threaten to destroy all that has been gained by the toil and struggle of the race. Views of human relations are being promoted which, if put into practice, would make hell a pleasure resort in comparison with earth. Governments are crumbling. Nothing any more

seems sacred. It has been suggested that even God Himself be abolished. In the presence of this riot of blasphemy and anarchy, the faith of some falters and fails. The outlook is dark and ominous. Men are asking: "Is civilization an impossible dream?"

There is, however, another side to the situation. There are elements in the outlook which signify a human efficiency and achievement never surpassed. Man is more completely in possession of the mastery of material forces than ever before. His discoveries have wrested from nature some of its profoundest secrets. His inventions have harnessed land, sea, and sky, and made them his servants to an extent before undreamed. He has attempted the impossible and in some instances has accomplished it. What is there that he cannot do? He has dominion over every realm. He can rule anything. Yes, anything but himself.

One does not need to be wise to find there is little hope of curing world unrest through man's mastery of nature and science, of trade and invention. Man was never more of a superman than he is to-day, and the inadequacy of his mastery of world forces to establish a sane social order was never more apparent. Something more is needed to straighten out this crooked world, to shame its lust and slay its selfishness, to destroy blasphemy and establish righteousness, to conquer hate and foster good will, something more is needed to

bridle the license which runs wild in the world to-day, and deliver us from perils which threaten to make civilization impossible, something more by far is needed than a superman's empire over nature. What is it?

We shall not find it short of Calvary. We are helpless until we fall back on the cross. What the world needs to-day is not eagerness to accumulate but willingness to spend, not genius for mastering material forces but a vision of spiritual values, not lust for power but passion for service, not a perch in the sun but a cross on a hillcrest. The world needs a fresh infusion of the sacrificial spirit.

We need the eyes of Calvary to see men as Christ saw them from the cross. They were not enemies He saw, though they drove the nails through His hands, for He prayed: "Father, forgive them." They were not criminals, for He said to the thief: "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." They were His brothers. When we can look into a man's face, whether he be labourer or capitalist, whether he be Briton or Teuton, and see what the cross-crowned Christ saw, the broken world will begin to mend.

We need the heart of Calvary, to feel toward men as Christ felt as He hung there on the cross. He did not hate them nor fear them. He loved them, because He died for them. He was more anxious to help them than to deliver Himself. He could have come down from the cross and declined

sacrifice. It was love that kept Him there. It is love this worn world needs, not genius, not brains, not statesmanship, not money and power,—just love; and God is love.

We need the passion of Calvary. Then we shall do for men what Christ did. He was no profiteer, no wanton striker. He died for us. Neither man nor God could go further. "Greater love hath no man than this." What society needs is not to kill off a lot of undesirables. To be sure violence must be punished and anarchy stamped out, but the world will never be cleared of revolution by killing people. There must be some who elect to die for the brethren if the world is ever to have a better day. This is the challenge the world throws at the Church. Can we reproduce Calvary? Can we reenact the cross?

THE CHALLENGE

It is a challenge Christian men cannot ignore. The Church has come to its biggest opportunity since Calvary. The value of what it has to offer was never more apparent. Men are seeing that the objectives of the Christian Church are those of any civilization worth having. As never before, the sick world is turning to the Church for a helping hand. The Church is face to face with its largest opportunity, its most compelling hour, since Calvary.

There are evidences that the Church is waking

to the challenge and trying to form its lines for larger things than man has ever yet attempted in God's name. Some of these plans are so vast, so far-reaching, so smashing of precedent, so revolutionary as to stagger and bewilder. Whether they are the crotchets of crazy enthusiasts or the statesmanship of a Caleb-like faith remains for the future to reveal.

But any movement that is to meet the needs of the world to-day must do more than perfect a splendid organization and project its plans on a world scale. It must do that. It must use machinery and publicity and executive ability and everything that is an asset anywhere for God and His kingdom. But all this must be saturated through and through with the spirit of Calvary. The men who are behind the organization must be men who are comrades of the cross.

Can the twentieth century reproduce Calvary? It can raise money. It can hold big conventions. It can muster numbers and arouse enthusiasm, but can it lay down its life? Can it produce men and women who deliberately elect to stay poor, who are content with obscurity, who are willing to wait for results, and if needs be, die with the nails in their hands and the thorns on their brow?

For such people the world waits. There is a value in sacrifice which earth cannot measure. It is sacrifice that brings us face to face with the only power that can save the world. It is sacrifice that

lifts mediocrity to genius and widens provincialism out into world citizenship.

THE SACRIFICIAL SPIRIT

What the world needs to-day is a larger measure of the sacrificial spirit,—not of the sacrifice that is spectacular or that is punitive, but of the sacrifice that serves. It was a dead world to which Christ came two thousand years ago. It had burned itself out in sin. Its ideals had rotted down in luxury and self-indulgence. Arrogance, cynicism, doubt, and despair were on every hand. Into that world of shame and decay, of sensuality and senile despair, Christ built Calvary, and from the hour He died on the cross there was hope.

Can Calvary be built into the modern world? It is no less than this that Jesus expects of His followers. He is not asking for influence and wealth and organization. He is asking for sacrifice, for people who are so wholly devoted to Him and the cause for which He died that they are ready to die, too. I do not mean that any man can atone for sin, that our cross can ever be a substitute for His cross, but if His cross is real to me, it must be an experience, and not merely a memory.

Are we ready for the cross? Are we ready to carry it, to hang on it, to get crucified? What are we out for? The biggest issue before the world is not internationalism or labour unionism or Bolshevism. It is not the red peril. It is the red hope, the scarlet, blood-dyed hope of Calvary!

XXIV

MEMORY AND HOPE AT THE COMMUNION TABLE

"This do in remembrance of me."—LUKE 22: 19.

"Christ Jesus our hope."—I TIMOTHY 1: 1.

AS Christ's friends gather at the communion table, it is to keep the feast of love, to celebrate the rite by which faith pledges anew its loyalty to the Saviour.

MEMORY

It is an hour for memory. Christ instituted the Supper to keep His people from forgetting Him. "This do in remembrance of me." As we approach the table, let memory cast its spell.

Let us remember what the world was when Christ was crucified. It was a wild world. Force was in control. A large part of the human race was in slavery. Ignorance, illiteracy, and superstition were widespread. Violence and crime were the order of the day. Degradation so base that it must be suggested rather than discussed was common. Cities were cesspools of iniquity, and government a name for oppression. This was the kind of world in which Christ lived. Let us not

forget those days. Remembering them, we shall be less tempted to despair in these.

For it is something of a wild world still. Forces which threaten society have broken their leash, and unless rebuked and restrained will result in widespread disaster. There is still the blight of ignorance, illiteracy, and superstition, still the rough hand of violence, the red eye of lust, and the dripping talon of greed. But the world is less wild than it was. If Christ did not despair then, we need not now. If He saw enough of good in that wild world to die for it, surely we can find enough of good in ours to live for it. This is no time for despair. Let us remember until faith grows steady and we take a fresh grip on our work.

Let us remember that innocence suffered. Christ did not deserve the treatment He got. He was no criminal. His was the purest life the world has known. His was the gentlest spirit that ever breathed among us. Jesus was the best man Who ever walked the earth. But He suffered, and His sufferings were real and great. Men suffer according to their power to feel rather than according to the blow that is struck. Christ's power to feel was infinite. His sufferings were indescribable. And withal, He was innocent.

When we suffer without cause, let us remember Christ. It is not easy to suffer when one is conscious of his innocence. If anything can make a man hate society, it is for society to punish him for

a crime of which he is not guilty. If there is anything that makes it difficult to cherish high ideals and keep on trying to do right, it is to know that you have not had a square deal. But when we are tempted to throw down our tools and quit because those we have tried to help failed to play fair, let memory lead us by the hand into the presence of that white light that was led as a lamb to the slaughter.

Let us remember that Calvary was not a defeat. It looked so at the time. It looked as if hate had triumphed. As Christ hung there on the cross and His enemies cast lots for His seamless robe, and Herod and Caiaphas congratulated themselves on the successful accomplishment of the dirtiest day's work history records, it looked as though virtue was whipped. But we know now that it was not, that Calvary was Christ's supreme victory, that from that cross He had His crown.

Let us remember that the cross is always this, and when we come to our Calvary, let us not be utterly cast down. Again and again the soul that tries to save the world must submit to crucifixion, but as the nails are driven in and the thorns and the spear, let every one who loves a cause better than he does his life remember the green hill far away, and the Man Who hung there until He became so lonely that He thought even God had forsaken Him. Remembering this, gloom and despair will vanish.

Let us remember that Christ loved us. I could consent to give up everything but this, and still feel that I had enough left to make the morning sure. But if I shall ever reach an hour when I feel that Christ's love is dead, I shall know that the night has conquered, and that I am lost. Christ died on the cross to prove His love, a love so high that the topmost heavens are not higher, so deep that the bottom of hell is not deeper, so steady that time cannot change it, so constant that eternity cannot wear it out. Oh, to be able with all saints to comprehend the love that passeth knowledge! At the holy table let us remember the Saviour's love.

If we will, we can stand anything. There is much we cannot understand, but if Christ loves us, we know that God is our Friend. If He is, the web of fate will untangle, and the long, winding road will end where welcome waits to greet the weary.

HOPE

And so the holy communion is a place not only for memory, but for hope. Christ Jesus is our hope. As we look out on the wild world to-day, let us hope because we believe in Christ. He is able to handle the situation. With such a gospel, I am glad to be a preacher, because I have the remedy for a sick world, the only charm that will tame its wildness, the only call that will lure it

from its jungle and transform it from a fear to a friend.

When we are wronged, let us think of Christ, and stay sweet, and remain steady. Injustice is not permanent. Life's great reward is not what men may think. It is to hear His dear lips say: "Well done."

"Men see thee, hear thee, praise thee not,
The Master praises; what are men?"

When the fight looks lost, let us think of the crucified Christ, and fight on. Let us think of the defeats that have been changed to victories. We fall to rise. "These light afflictions which are but for a moment shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

"Then welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand, but go."

And when the day is dark and the way is long, and the burden heavier than we can bear, let us think of His love, until hope once more starts its clear song on our tired lips.

"This do in remembrance of me." "Christ Jesus our hope." Memory and hope at the communion table! These are the twin angels of the life serene, and they greet us at the table of the King of Love. As we take the bread, let us re-

member. As we touch to our lips the chalice of His blood, let us hope. There is no death for those who remember, and there is deathless victory for those who hope!

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